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UNBELIEF

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY

A CRITICAL HISTORY

BY

HENRY C. SHELDON
Professor in Boston University

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

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PREFACE

COMPACT and accurate exposition was the first end kept in view in the preparation of this treatise. Criticism of the different forms of unbelief was the second end. The author would express the hope that he has not been greatly at fault as respects observing a proper balance between these two ends.

Boston University, February, 1907.

INTRODUCTION

I

Complete self-consistency is not to be expected in the average man, or even in the superior man. Finitude implies limitation of vision, and the imperfect outlook is likely to effect a wryness in the judgment. Thus it may come about that an unbelieving head should be yoked with a believing heart, a mutilated creed be associated with unreserved committal to known truth. Doubtless the sound disposition is favorable to the sound belief, and in the long run works for its ascendency. But in the case of the individual, as he is found at a particular epoch, the harmonious adjustment may fail to appear. The same person who gives place to a very considerable measure of intellectual skepticism may be liberally endowed with the ethico-religious temper of faith. In spite of the negations to which he subscribes in theory, he may be intent to discover the highest ideals and cultivate a habit of hearty surrender to them. And herein lies the very essence of faith as a principle of personal worth. No man who is bent upon knowing the highest and the best, and who unites himself with it, so far as discovered, in affectionate loyalty and self-devotement, is practically an unbeliever.

In the light of the above discrimination it will be readily understood that it is quite foreign to this volume to pass judgment upon persons. The volume deals with unbelief taken purely in the theoretic or intellectual sense. There is no intention to render a decision respecting the practical unbelief of any person or party. Indeed,

it is freely admitted that not a few of those who, on the score of their opinions, are made to represent one or another phase of unbelief may have been, in the practical or ethico-religious sense, very stanch believers, and entitled in this respect to outrank many whose reputation for orthodoxy is unblemished.

II

That the theme in hand should be treated in an objective manner is quite obvious. At the same time the nature of the theme makes it difficult to exclude a subjective element. What is to be embraced in unbelief can be determined only by reference to a standard, and there is no standard available in which the personal standpoint, the element of individual faith, does not enter. The absolute standard, fixed and indubitable, untouched by personal prejudice or preference, has never been numbered among the possessions of men. Granting that it exists in the intellectual and ethical nature of God, we have nevertheless to look for guarantees that it has been made available in its pure objectivity for human use. And who can furnish such guarantees? Who can point to the standard and say, "There it is, entire, faultless, accessible"? We have before us, it is true, the biblical revelation. But the presence of this revelation affords no sure pledge of entire release from the bonds of subjectivity. Even if it be supposed—a thing beyond the range of possible demonstration—that no one of the biblical writers mingled aught of his own individual thought or feeling with the divine message, it still remains true that our possession of the biblical contents must measure our competency to use them as a standard, and that possession in our case is conditioned by our intellectual and religious development. So long as we

keep clear of dogmatic frenzy, and are sane enough to recognize our indubitable limitations, we must confess that we cannot bring the opinions of our fellows to the judgment seat of an absolute standard, but must estimate them by a standard in which our individual point of view is more or less of a factor.

It follows that in developing the present theme the reasonable requirement is simply the reduction of the subjective factor to the lowest terms that are practicable. And by what is practicable is meant, in this connection, that which may have place within the limits of conformity to the requirements of essential Christianity. In a treatise which is written professedly from the Christian standpoint unbelief naturally will not be judged by a less exacting standard than the essential content of the Christian system. Accordingly, the reduction of subjectivity to the lowest practicable terms implies simply the use of proper caution against reckoning into the essential content of Christianity any items of a merely personal faith. Just what a wise caution will permit to be included in this content will doubtless be a subject for varied opinions. To the writer it seems evident that nothing should be included which is not easily to be derived from the Scriptures by a fair exegesis, and for which also a clear support is not provided in the general consensus of Christian scholarship. We say *general* consensus, for a demand for strict unanimity would be exorbitant in a world which has never yet shown itself to be proof against eccentricities. Applying now the double test just stated, we are under compulsion, in the first place, to reckon as a part of the essential Christian content a stanch theistic conception, that conception in which the ultimate reality is presented as thoroughly personal. Authentic Christianity knows nothing of a supra-per-

sonal God. The supra-personal, in its view, is an ill-chosen name for the infra-personal. It regards personality as the highest category, and will not consent to take up with any substitute for the God who, as intelligent and free, can create a kingdom of intelligent and free beings, and provide for their beatification in true fellowship with himself. In the second place, we are under compulsion to include in the essential Christian content the truth that Jesus Christ was a transcendent personality, and came into the world to fulfill an extraordinary mediatorial office. In construing Christ's person and in interpreting his mediatorial work, it may not be necessary to insist upon a clear-cut, exclusive theory. But both the extraordinary personality and the extraordinary work are of vital importance. Preëminence and finality belong to Christianity precisely on the ground that he in whom it centers was fitted, in virtue of his extraordinary personality and office, to be the perfect bearer of the truth and grace of God; and, of course, real faith in Christianity cannot claim anything less for this religion than preëminence and finality. In the third place, we are under constraint to locate within the essential Christian content such a view of man as is consonant with his dignity as a subject of moral rule, as a servant and a son of the Most High, and as a candidate for the pure blessedness and high fellowships of an immortal life. Any theory which makes man simply a part of a cosmic mechanism, a mere link in a chain of causes operating according to the law of mechanical necessity, abolishes the subject which Christianity contemplates. From first to last it requires that man should be defined as a free personality, dowered with essential aptitudes for morality and religion.

With this essential content of Christianity, which can-

not be denied without exposure to a legitimate charge of unbelief, is to be associated the claim that the content in its full compass has received a credible historic attestation. Christianity is not a name for a purely speculative system or a body of ideal truth. It assumes to be an historical religion, to rest upon a basis of ascertained facts. A contrary assumption would involve a manifest incongruity, a contradiction to the fundamental Christian postulate as to the ultimate reality. Given a God who stands to men in the relation of a Supreme Father, and it inevitably follows that he must reveal himself. What kind of a father would he be who would not show himself to his children, or to those having an inborn capacity to become in spirit his children? God's fatherhood toward men implies revelation to men. Human history under the superintendence of the Divine Father could not be left to run a meaningless course. The clearest demands of fitness require that it should be utilized to disclose the Father to the dim vision of men, and to lift them up to the realization of their filial privilege. Had Christianity postulated a merely transcendent God, a being dwelling apart in lofty indifference, it would not be so clearly committed to the idea of an historic revelation. With its actual theistic content it is under rational compulsion to assume that by the divine ordination an office of revelation is fulfilled in the unfoldments of human history. Theoretically this history in its entirety might serve as a medium of revelation; and doubtless within limits it does fulfill that office. But, inasmuch as Jesus Christ in his extraordinary personality and mediatorial work is central to the Christian system, from the point of view of that system revelation must be regarded as having its crown or focus in him. And here is the consideration which justifies the claim of a certain primacy for

the Bible. It is the most authentic record of the revelation leading up to and culminating in Jesus Christ. As such it fulfills a special function in mirroring the truths which are of the highest ethical and religious import. It has authority as being on the whole a trustworthy compendium of these truths. This, rather than the question of the precise quality of the inspiration of its authors, is the vital consideration. If, when taken in its trend and outcome, the Bible conveys to us a trustworthy witness on the essential content of the true religion, it is a worthy instrument of divine providence, and fulfills as high an office as could properly be asked of a sacred literature. Christian theologians, it is true, have often gone further, and claimed a detailed infallibility for the Bible. But the defense of so adventurous a theory involves a very troublesome task, and with the advance of scholarship becomes more and more a matter of despair. Least of all is there any propriety in using such a theory as a test of the Christian character of opinions. It is enough to claim that the Bible in its trend and outcome affords to the candid and intelligent inquirer trustworthy means of ascertaining the essential content of the true religion. Accordingly, in the following pages only those critical theories which seem to contradict or to compromise this office of the Bible will be treated as belonging to the sphere of unbelief.

III

The disposition of the subject-matter into three parts has been adopted on the score of general convenience rather than of strict logical propriety. Some of the items reserved for the second part might, without breach of consistent terminology, have been considered in the first part. It seemed desirable, however, to treat of them

aside from specific connection with the historical systems which are dwelt upon in that part. In relation to the terms used in the title of the third division, it only needs to be said that under "critical theories" are included various products of the historico-critical study of the Bible.

IV

A due regard to the demands of economy will, of course, forbid a detailed description of each of several forms of unbelief, which, however distinct a place they may appear to have had in the historical evolution, are very nearly identical in substance. The same demands, as also the fitness of things, will exclude reference to manifestations of unbelief which have had no basis in scholarly industry or acquisitions, and which seem to have been thrust into the face of the public mainly for the purpose of gratifying an intemperate appetite for notoriety. Even to manifestations of unbelief which have come from men of masterful scholarship it will not always be appropriate to render any large consideration. An expert in a particular branch of scientific study may have some competency in the domain of philosophy or of theology; and again he may be signally incompetent to pass upon the great questions of those domains. His just reputation, therefore, in his special branch is not to be taken as in itself a valid recommendation of opinions which he may choose to utter on philosophical or theological themes. These opinions may be wise and profound, but there is a liability of their being venturesome and superficial. A species of fraud, or at least of unwitting deception, takes place when expert scholarship is allowed to give prestige to judgments which fall quite outside the province of that scholarship.

PART I
PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES

CHAPTER I

RADICAL IDEALISM

I.—Kantian Antecedents

The idealistic philosophizing of the early part of the nineteenth century owed so much of incentive and direction to Kantian points of view that it becomes fitting, before bringing it under examination, to notice briefly the more characteristic features of Kant's system.

1. A fundamental postulate of the system is the activity of the mind, its real agency or determining efficiency in the processes of cognition. The mind, according to Kant, is far from being like a sheet of blank paper which merely takes the record which may be inscribed upon it by an exterior power. No more is it like an empty vessel which is simply receptive of a content that may be poured into it. So far from being the passive subject of impressions, the mind by its own intrinsic energy reacts upon impressions and supplies from itself necessary factors in rational experience.

2. The activity of the mind proceeds according to certain constitutional aptitudes or necessities. By virtue of this constitutional outfit the mind is able to organize the data which are supplied through sense impressions and to find in a particular order of impressions a particular meaning. Its constitution is not evolved out of experience, but it has the experience of a cognitive being because of its possession from the start of a constitution. In other words, the mind as such is dowered with *a priori* forms. It construes reality by applying to it a series of

categories, such as unity, plurality, causality, existence, possibility, and necessity. Temporally considered, these *a priori* forms are not indeed antecedent to experience, but logically they are prior to experience and serve as its condition.

3. The *a priori* forms which belong to the mind, as being simply subjective forms, cannot by themselves serve as an adequate ground for deducing a system of reality. Any structure that could be formed out of them would be purely ideal, and no guarantee could be afforded of its correspondence with aught in the sphere of the actual. Knowledge of the real comes only with the presentation of objects. While the objects can gain no intelligible presentation without the *a priori* forms of intuition and thought, the forms are empty without the objects. Even with the conjunction of the two only a limited knowledge is guaranteed. For just one class of objects is presented, namely, appearances or phenomena. The noumena, the things-in-themselves, the substantial entities back of appearances, are inaccessible to us. They lie beyond the range of cognition. They are not defined to us by the categories, for these, as being subjective forms, cannot be assumed to have any objective validity. It seems, therefore, that our knowledge is confined within rather narrow limits; that, in fact, we are debarred from confident assertion even on such important matters as the substantial being of the soul and the existence of God as Supreme Person. At least, on the basis of purely intellectual or theoretical procedure, which in its inferences pays strict deference to the causal relation, we have no clear means of passing beyond the province of the phenomenal.

4. The limited results of intellectual procedure do not by any means consign us to a blank agnosticism. Man

is not simply intellect; he is, above all, a moral agent. Deeply inbedded in his moral nature there is an all-comprehending law of duty, a categorical imperative, which requires him so to act that the maxim of his will can serve at the same time as a principle of universal legislation. In the presence of this great law, which it is impossible for him to challenge, he is under compulsion to infer his freedom, his immortality, and his relation to a personal God. This inference may partake of the nature of faith, as opposed to strict knowledge; but the faith is rational and warranted, and thus has the practical worth of knowledge. In the exercise of this rational faith man passes beyond the bounds of the phenomenal in which he seemed to be inclosed, and secures a good degree of certitude respecting the substantial existence of finite spirits and of God as the intelligent ruler over all.

5. Man's highest dignity lies in the recognition and the fulfillment of the moral law. In achieving this fulfillment there is no substitute for personal endeavor. Strenuousness of righteous will is the great demand. Religion offers no valid substitute for this. The best that it can do is to illustrate and enforce the moral law which is contained in the constitution of man. Only as it fulfills this end has a revealed religion a just claim to universality.

With the first two of these cardinal points of the Kantian system the idealistic philosophers who followed the Königsberg sage were in substantial agreement. They did not, indeed, regard Kant's list of categories as beyond revision, but they accepted his fundamental conceptions as to the nature and agency of mind. In relation to the third point they received a profound incentive. The unfinished construction which seemed here to pertain

to the Kantian system served to them as a summons to pass on to a speculative standpoint more inclusive and adequate than that occupied by their great predecessor. They were not willing to leave the thinking subject set over against an inaccessible noumenal realm or sphere of substantial being. It was the proper task of philosophy, as they conceived, to overcome the agnosticism and dualism pertaining to this order of representation, and to achieve a unified view of the entire sum of reality. The ways in which they attempted to execute this task gave to their respective philosophies their distinctive peculiarities. The fourth point, or the primacy which Kant assigned to the practical reason—that is, to the demands of the nature of man as a moral agent—was made fundamental in Fichte's system. As regards the fifth point, all the great idealists who built on the foundations supplied by Kant differed from him in making larger account of religion as distinguished from simple morality, and in explicit stress laid upon the divine immanence, as opposed to the somewhat deistic way in which the Kantian philosophy expounded the relation of God to the human spirit.

It is a very common judgment that, in spite of its greatness and suggestiveness, the system of Kant is open to strictures on its metaphysical as well as on its religious side. In relation to the former it may be said to err by giving place to an unnecessary agnosticism. This appears in the assumption of an unqualified antithesis between phenomena and things-in-themselves. The supposition seems to be entertained that the knowledge of the one does not imply any real knowledge of the other. But this certainly is a quite gratuitous supposition. In a universe built on a rational plan—as the universe in which man is placed must be understood to be, if he has any

vocation to think about it at all—phenomena may warrantably be conceived to truly advertise the realities to which they belong, so that the knowledge of the one must involve a valid, though not necessarily an exhaustive, knowledge of the other. A like qualification of the agnostic element in Kant's thinking may be reached through an inspection of his thesis upon the purely subjective validity of the categories. This thesis he has not justified. He has not even been true to it himself, since in one relation or another he has assumed that the objective world has that which corresponds to our subjective forms of thought. Furthermore, he has indirectly furnished a very cogent ground for accepting the objective validity of the categories. In considering man as a moral agent he has assumed that the arrangement of the universe must correspond with the demands of moral personality. Why not assume also that the universe is harmoniously related to man as an intellectual being? Why suppose that our knowledge must be subject to suspicion just because we must know as men? If as men we are aliens in the universe, then an attempt to philosophize is pure foolishness. If, on the contrary, we are in any wise properly coördinated with the rest of the universe, then we are entitled to conclude that our necessary forms of thought have their counterpart in the sphere of objective realities.

The deficit of the Kantian system of thought on the side of religion has already been intimated. It applies to this domain an inadequate measure. While it magnifies worthily the grandeur of the moral law, it makes scanty room for the sense of dependence upon God and for the thought of inner enrichment through communion with him.

II.—Grounds for a Favorable Estimate of the Post-Kantian Idealism

Idealism as such has no necessary affiliation with unbelief. On the contrary, it is the natural ally of a spiritual creed. In giving the primacy to the supersensuous, in contending that spirit or mind is ultimate and fundamental, so that a comprehensive and rational interpretation of the universe must proceed from the conception of spirit or mind, idealism takes ground that lies very close to many a declaration in the Christian oracles. Has not Christ said that God is Spirit and must be worshiped in a spiritual manner? Has not Paul taught that in this infinite Spirit we all live and move and have our being? Has not the apostle furthermore identified the eternal with the unseen and the temporal with the seen? Such statements are obviously quite in line with idealistic postulates, and along with other sentences of a similar tenor serve to manifest the congenial relation subsisting between idealism and Christian faith. Even radical idealism is not necessarily hostile to any part of the Christian creed. For, however far it may go in its assumption that in the last analysis all forms of being reduce to thought, mind, or spirit, it may still affirm that it makes no question about the actuality of the world, and only advocates a special view of the nature of the world. Now, this special view of the nature of the world, so long as it does not deny the proper conception of God or of man, will make no trouble for Christian faith; since what this faith requires is simply the actuality of the world, the presence of conditions or powers which have for the consciousness of the individual the practical worth of a standing theater or environment. Religious faith can assume a neutral position toward the most radical idealism which leaves

God and man in their integrity. But, while this is true, it is legitimate to be somewhat slow and cautious in accepting the claims of any specific scheme of radical idealism. However little ground of suspicion there may be against idealism, there is considerable ground for a doubting and halting attitude toward radicalism. It often happens that the radical system-maker, in order to gain for his system the credit of being all-inclusive, treats as non-existent that which is really existent. Radical idealists, as being men of like infirmities with other radicals, may, of course, have fallen sometimes into the fault of sacrificing fact in an intemperate exaltation of a favorite theory.

The capacity of idealism to stand in friendly relations with Christian faith found an appreciable measure of illustration in the post-Kantian idealistic philosophy, which was represented in particular by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and which had its principal literary period between the last years of the eighteenth century and the fourth decade of the nineteenth. In truth, the teaching of these illustrious men contains not only much of high intellectual interest, but also much that must command the appreciation of any serious and enlightened believer in Christianity.

In the first place, it was characteristic of these philosophers profoundly to emphasize the religious element in man's life. It would not be easy to find stronger words on this theme than those which they have written. "All irreligion," says Fichte, "remains upon the surface of things, caught in the empty appearance, and just on this account presupposes a lack of power and energy of spirit, and betrays a weakness of the head as well as of character; on the contrary, religion, as rising above the appearance and pressing into the essence of things, necessarily

discloses the happiest use of the powers of the spirit, the greatest profundity and penetration, and, as necessarily connected therewith, the highest strength of character."[1] "The one thing truly noble in man, the highest form of the one idea which has become clear within him, is religion."[2] "In religion there is no fate, but only wisdom and goodness, to which man is not compelled to submit himself, but which embrace him with infinite love."[3] "Religion elevates him who is devoted to her service above time as such, above the transient and the perishable, and puts him in immediate possession of eternity."[4] "Blessedness is unwavering repose in the One Eternal; wretchedness is vagrancy amid the manifold and transitory."[5] In Schelling much the same high estimate of religion may be observed. "A philosophy," he says, "which in its principle is not already religion we do not acknowledge to be a philosophy."[6] Again he remarks, "Only he who knows God is truly moral."[7] If Hegel speaks with less warmth than does Fichte of personal religion, his estimate is still a very exalted one. "All that has worth and dignity for man," he says, "all wherein he seeks his happiness, his glory, and his pride, finds its ultimate center in religion, in the thought, the consciousness, and the feeling of God."[8] "Religion is the ultimate and highest sphere of human consciousness."[9] "Religion is a product of the Divine Spirit; it is not a discovery of man, but a work of Divine operation and creation in him."[10] "The object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity, God and nothing but

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[1] Die Anweisung zum seeligen Leben, Vorlesung xi.
[2] Characteristics of the Present Age, trans. by William Smith, Lecture xvii.
[3] Ibid., Lecture xvii. [4] Ibid., Lecture xvi.
[5] Anweisung, Vorlesung i. [6] Werke, v. 116.
[7] Cited by Kuno Fischer, Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie, vi. 882.
[8] Philosophy of Religion, trans. by Speirs and Sanderson, i. 2.
[9] Ibid., i. 54. [10] Ibid., i. 33.

God and the explication of God."[1] "Religion is not consciousness of this or that truth in individual objects, but of the absolute truth, of truth as the universal, the all-comprehending, outside of which there lies nothing at all."[2]

In the second place, these philosophers occupied in the main a friendly attitude toward Christianity as a historical religion, and made no question as to its preëminence and finality. Fichte may not have been very reverential toward some of the objects of common Christian appreciation. He spoke, for example, very disparagingly of the Pauline writings as being largely given to a futile argumentation. It was his conviction, however, that the New Testament, especially in the writings of John, serves as a trustworthy mirror of the eternal verities of true religion. He expressed the judgment that a candid review of the content of Christianity would show that it had the same purpose as his own philosophy.[3] That he considered Christianity distinctly superior to every other form of religion, and above the liability of being superseded, is manifest from the position which he assigned to Christ. According to the Christian dogma, he says, "Jesus of Nazareth absolutely, by and through himself, without deliberate act, is the perfect sensible manifestation of the eternal Word, as no one whosoever has been before him; while those who become his disciples are as yet not such, since they still stand in need of its manifestation in him; they must become such through him." This dogma he approved in both its parts, expressing his assent to the first part in these terms: "Jesus of Nazareth is in a wholly peculiar manner, attributable to no one but him, the only begotten and first born Son of God; and all ages which are capable of understanding him at all must

[1] Philosophy of Religion, I. 19. [2] Ibid., I. 22.
[3] Appelation an das Publicum, Werke, V. 223, 224.

recognize him in this character."[1] Schelling was not uniform throughout his philosophical career in his attitude toward Christian tenets. He seems, however, in all stages to have been appreciative of the fact of the incarnation in Christ as being at least the central specimen of that union of the divine with the human which is ever in process, and in his later teaching distinctly attributed a transcendent nature to Christ. With Hegel the absolute character of the Christian religion was a clearly recognized conclusion. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity, taken in its essential meaning, was pronounced by him to be indispensable to a sound philosophy. He spoke of the life story of Christ as a true history with a divine content. He affirmed that the Son, as the other of the Father, has "the entire fullness of the divine nature in himself," and repudiated the application to him of merely human measures in these emphatic terms: "If we say nothing more of Christ than that he was a teacher of humanity and a martyr of the truth we do not occupy the Christian standpoint, the standpoint of the true religion."[2] A question may indeed be raised as to whether Hegel always put the sense of catholic Christianity into catholic formulas; but that his estimate of historical Christianity was very high there is no good reason to doubt.

Once more, these philosophers may be credited with a real service to Christian faith by their forceful advocacy of important elements of truth. Thus Fichte profoundly emphasized man's moral agency as conditioning his insight. "Only by the fundamental improvement of my will," he says, "does a new light arise within me concerning my existence and vocation; without this, however much I may speculate, and with what rare gifts soever I

[1] Anweisung, Vorlesung vi. [2] Philosophy of Religion, III. 70, 78.

may be endowed, darkness remains within me and around me."[1] Not only did he make moral agency the necessary basis of enlightenment as respects our higher relations; he affirmed also that it is the one substantial ground of intellectual confidence in the existence of the world. "Whatever has existence for me," he contends, "has it only through its relation to my own being. But there is in the highest sense, only one relation to me possible; all others are but subordinate to this: my relation to moral activity. My world is the object and sphere of my duties and absolutely nothing more. . . . From this necessity of action proceeds the consciousness of the actual world. . . . We do not act because we know, but we know because we are called upon to act; the practical reason is the root of all reason. The laws of action for rational beings are immediately certain; their world is certain only through that previous certainty."[2] "Our world is the sensible material of our duty; this is the properly real in things, the true basal principle (Grundstoff) of all appearance."[3] Fitche may be thought to have run into paradox in the stress which he placed upon the worth of moral agency for cognition; but it cannot well be denied that he touched here upon a great truth which no sane philosophy can overlook. Among the contributions of Schelling special mention may be made of the stimulus which he gave to the recognition of the divine in nature. To Hegel belongs the merit of helping forward a needful revision of the conception of spirit, whether taken in the divine or the human range. Over against the abnormal stress upon simplicity of essence as distinctive of spirit and especially of God, which had

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[1] Vocation of Man, trans. by William Smith, Book iii.
[2] Ibid., Book iii.
[3] Ueber den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung, Werke, V. 185.

place in Christian dogmatics from the days of the fathers, Hegel profoundly emphasized the truth that a certain manifoldness pertains to spirit, that its capacity for life is based in contrast, and that it comes to self-realization through diverse activities. "Whatever," he says, "is merely or abstractly simple, without complexity, is a dead thing."[1] From this point of view he laid great stress upon the trinitarian conception, declaring that "God is recognized as spirit only when known as the Triune."[2] Doubtless exception may be taken to the way in which Hegel carried out his thought of spirit as subsisting in its proper character only through a process; but it can scarcely be questioned that in his general thought on this theme he provided an improved basis for conceiving of God as the living God, to say nothing about furnishing a suitable foundation for the specific doctrines of trinity and incarnation.

In addition to the several grounds of appreciation which have been stated, it may be noticed that these philosophers were decidedly antagonistic to the rationalism of the preceding century, the "Illuminism," with its deistic preferences and its infinite confidence in its possession of all truth. The terms in which they mention it are little less than scornful. Schelling remarks that in relation to Christianity the so-called Aufklärerei might better be called an Ausklärerei, a clearing-out rather than a clearing-up.[3] Hegel characterizes the system of Illuminism as "only an abstract metaphysic of the understanding," which turns God into a poor and empty being.[4]

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[1] Logic, trans. by Wallace, chap. iv, p. 82.

[2] Philosophy of History, trans. by Sibree, p. 331; see also various statements in the Philosophy of Religion.

[3] Vorlesungen ueber die Methode des akademischen Studiums, Werke, V. 300.

[4] Philosophy of Religion, I. 29, 30.

It was appropriate to notice the post-Kantian idealism on the side of its affiliation with Christian belief before turning to the reverse side. In the light of this procedure it will be understood that the mention of that idealism in a history of unbelief involves no judgment that it made on the whole for skepticism rather than for faith. All that the mention imports is that certain features had place in the philosophies of Kant's idealistic successors upon which a superstructure of unbelief might be built, and to some extent has been built. The assertion of this much will still leave one free to attribute a distinct value to those philosophies as contributions toward the solution of great problems with which man's spirit has been wrestling through the ages.

III.—Questionable Points in Fichte's Thinking

Zeller remarks respecting Fichte that "the paradoxical nature of a proposition was to him no occasion for subjecting it to doubt."[1] His earnest, doctrinaire temper stopped at nothing which seemed to be implied in an accepted point of view. This characteristic may serve to explain in a measure the remarkable speculative shift by which Fichte essayed to gain the unified view of reality which Kant failed to achieve. Instead of permitting the world, as an objective entity, to confront the self, or ego, he reduced all to the ego. The ego, he maintained, is the thing-in-itself, the real noumenon, and there is no other. In its essence the ego is activity, an activity which is aware of itself, and thus is at once being and consciousness, the real and the ideal. But to be properly aware of itself the ego needs to be set in antithesis with an object, or non-ego, since a self-conscious subject is

[1] Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Leibniz, p. 600.

conceivable only in relation to an object. The ego comes into this necessary relation by its own act. It posits the non-ego, not as an objective reality, but as a limit set up within itself, by reacting against which it fulfills its calling to free self-development. The world appears, indeed, as an exterior object, but in truth it is only a limit which the ego from out of itself imposes upon itself, and thereby secures a ground for that perpetual striving with which its very being is identified. The goal toward which it looks is independence of all limits; but, as this can never be reached, the striving, and with that the selfhood, never ceases. As has been intimated in the preceding section, the striving falls under the law of duty, and may be described as the action of the moral will. Fichte's system appears thus as a monism in which the moral will is everything.

Upon this philosophical scheme two criticisms may be passed, a lesser and a greater. The lesser criticism relates to the forced and unsatisfactory account which is given of the non-ego. If we start with the definition of the ego as pure activity, where shall we find a logical warrant for the conclusion that the ego sets up a limit to itself in the non-ego? Is it the nature of activity to raise a barrier across its own path, the nature of pure spontaneity to erect a wall against which it may deceive itself with a sense of passivity? Surely the Fichtean account of the non-ego is somewhat fantastic as well as entirely gratuitous. Such a tremendous fact as is the outer world in the experience of the ego cannot credibly be explained as simply the ghostly product of a subjective activity. How does it happen that a purely subjective working is so amazingly particular to furnish, in connection with a given impression of geographical location, a substantially identical impression of the collocation

of objects on any number of successive occasions and in any number of conscious subjects? The "productive imagination," to use Fichte's phrase, which works with such persistent conformity to infinite complexities, is certainly a most astonishing thing, especially as it works in the dark, or beneath consciousness. As against such a miracle it is comparatively easy to accept a real world with which the ego proper, or the finite self, stands in relations of interaction. How this world is to be construed in the ultimate analysis may be very difficult to determine, but that it is the mere product of the observer into whose experience it enters only a very peculiar intellectual demand can make one believe.

The greater criticism of the Fichtean philosophy applies to the way in which it construes the thought of the absolute, or God. Implicitly and explicitly it collides at this point with the requirements of Christian theism. It is openly intolerant of the idea of a personal God. While it speaks of an absolute ego, its own premises show that the term is a misnomer. The only personal subject which it acknowledges is the empirical ego, the self-conscious finite being, which has personality just because it exists under limitations. Whatever God may be, according to Fichte, he cannot be a personal, conscious, distinct being. The moment we describe him as such we deny his infinitude, and fashion him after the pattern of our own finiteness. It would seem, then, that we must apply to him some impersonal or abstract term, or renounce the attempt to define him. Between these alternatives Fichte does not appear to have occupied a perfectly consistent position. On the one hand, he has said that to form a concept (Begriff) of God is to misrepresent him and turn him into an idol.[1] On the other

[1] Gerichtliche Verantwortungsschriften, Werke, V. 266, 267.

hand, he defines God formally as the moral order of the world. "That living and working moral order," he says, "is itself God; we need no other and can conceive of no other."[1] In this definition the terms "living" and "working" may be permitted to imply that God is not a mere abstraction; but evidently he is left to be regarded as simply a common factor in a plurality of moral persons. He cannot be thought to have any real existence apart from this company of moral persons, since a moral order without moral persons is an empty figment.

For this denial of the personality of God Fichte cannot be said to have offered grounds that merit any great amount of respect. His assumption that personality is incompatible with infinitude is to be challenged, as involving both a false measure of greatness and a false view of the necessary conditions of consciousness. It involves a false measure of greatness because it pays no proper respect to the supereminence of the qualitative element in greatness. Being is great by the possession of great qualities, and the greatest of qualities are those of personality, foremost among which are self-knowledge and self-direction. To apply these qualities in their highest reach to God is to exalt him. To lock God out of such high attributes is to lower, diminish, and degrade him. He is infinite as being all-comprehending in his intelligence and of unlimited potency in his will. To place him as person over against finite persons does not reduce him to finitude; for these finite persons, if not simply moments or factors in the process of his personal life, at any rate subsist only by his permission and through his efficiency. The sole original and independent one, faced by no limits that are not self-imposed, what does

[1] Ueber den Grund unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung, Werke, V. 186.

he lack of being the greatest conceivable, the truly infinite? Surely it is a strange procedure to deny infinitude to such a personality and to claim it for an impersonal moral order which has no existence outside a totality of finite persons, a totality that cannot be certified to be infinite.

The Fichtean view, as was noticed, is also to be challenged as involving a false view of the necessary condition of the consciousness which is indispensable to personality. Consciousness, it is claimed, can exist only in antithesis to an object; and, accordingly, only a subject, that is limited by an object, and therefore not infinite, can possess consciousness. The claim is arbitrary, and is especially gratuitous in connection with Fichte's conception of the nature of being. What consciousness requires is not an object proper, or anything presented under the category of objectivity, but simply a content. Suppose an ego that is essentially static or passive, and then we may have occasion to assume the impact of an outside power to set it in motion and to furnish it with the requisite content for consciousness. But Fitche, very rightly, as we think, rejects this fiction of a passive ego. Activity, as he contends, is its very essence. Why, then, should the ego require to be put in antithesis to an object to become conscious? In its own activities it is revealed to itself —in other words, made conscious of itself. Fitche seems in this relation to have made the mistake of judging self-consciousness universally by the peculiarity of one form or element of self-consciousness. So far as consciousness is shaped by the instrumentality of sense perception, it has, as an indispensable content, an impression of externality. But consciousness is much wider than this impression. It is not dependent upon

the impression, since it finds means of realization in the activities of an ego which is in its nature active. Only a self that is a mere blank, or at least empty of every element of spontaneity, and therefore no true self, needs to run its head against a barrier in order to become aware of itself. Thus the assumption on which Fichte based his denial of the personality of God is found in both of its members to be groundless.

It is not too much to say that the system of Fichte ran into speculative collapse at the point of its inadequate conception of God. The philosopher himself seems to have come ultimately to a half-confessed conviction that, to gain a sufficient world ground, we must posit something else than a moral order. He therefore veered toward the Spinozistic notion of a universal substance of which finite personalities are forms of manifestation. The revision, however, was implicit rather than formal, so that his philosophy ends in a very considerable mist.[1]

IV.—Schelling's Philosophy, Especially in its Middle Stage

It has been said of Schelling that he conducted his philosophical education before the public; and the remark cannot be charged with any serious trespass against the claims of charity. Brilliant, enthusiastic, and adventurous, he figured as the champion of views toward which his own zeal cooled after a brief interval. Apart from any special account of transition periods, at least three marked stages may be noted in his thinking. In the first he wrought as a disciple of Fichte. In the third he advanced to the theistic standpoint, but at the same

[1] Compare Zeller, Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Leibniz, pp. 630–635; Weber, History of Philosophy, pp. 486, 487.

time neutralized to a considerable extent the philosophical advantage of this standpoint by his predilection for theosophic vagaries. To the intermediate stage belongs that phase of Schelling's thinking which naturally claims most attention in a general glance at modern speculation.

The system brought out at this middle stage has been called the "philosophy of identity." The name expresses the goal to which Schelling was directed in his quest after complete unity. Having come to the conclusion that Fichte's scheme failed to give a satisfactory account of the non-ego, he was led to postulate the absolute as that which is above and beyond all contrast, the primal and basal unity, which is neither ego nor non-ego, subject nor object, ideal nor real, but the identity of these. It is the essence in which all distinctions are abolished, to which the terms universal and particular, infinite and finite, are alike inappropriate. It is such a unity as incloses a complete synthesis even of unity and contrast.

The absolute, which is thus in itself void of all contrasts, comes to manifestation in a double series, the subjective and the objective, the sphere of thought and consciousness and the sphere of nature. Inasmuch as there is the same identical essence in both—namely, the absolute—the two spheres are contrasted phenomenally rather than essentially. Nature is objective only so far as contemplated in relation to a subject. It is not mere body or mass. "There is no pure corporeity in nature. . . . Everything in the universe is possessed of soul. In other words, there is nothing in the universe that is merely body and not as such also immediately soul."[1] Plants and even inorganic nature have a psychic interior. Existence as individual has in the union of body and soul

[1]Vorlesungen ueber die Methode des akademischen Studiums, xi; System der gesammten Philosophie, Werke, VI. 217.

its necessary form, and action is to be imputed neither to the soul nor to the body, but to the one identical essence that is in both. As appears from these statements, Schelling's philosophy of nature was a panpsychism, in which the world as a whole was viewed as an organism, and every part of it as sharing more or less in psychic life.

Schelling's attempt to construe nature in an *a priori* manner, while it had its suggestive points, was confessedly very much of a failure as respects details. But this is a ground of criticism which we have little occasion to emphasize. The great objection to be urged against the "philosophy of identity" is that it is a pantheistic monism, which satisfies neither philosophy nor religion in the substitute which it offers for a personal God, and which also is compromising to the personality of man. For the legitimacy of at least the former part of this objection the philosopher's own maturer judgment may be cited.

An obvious ground of exception, from the philosophical standpoint, to Schelling's notion of the absolute is the logical impossibility that such a primal being should ever evolve anything out of its own blankness. As well look to empty space to act the part of the world-maker as think of getting a world out of an abyss of being which is totally void of distinctions, which in its lack of consciousness cannot purpose to make anything, and which affords in itself no pattern for anything. Schelling says, indeed, that the orignial being must reveal itself by bringing to actuality both the ideal and the real, but he neglects to tell us how it has in itself any basis of such a revelation. In fact, it is by the merest violence that any result can be gotten out of the distinctionless absolute. One is reminded of the expedient

to which Herbert Spencer resorts for getting his primary undifferentiated being into motion, namely, the assumption of the instability of the homogeneous. The homogeneous must forsooth evolve motion and difference, but why it should do so, apart from the mere accommodation of the philosopher, is not in the slightest degree apparent. On the premises of Schelling and Spencer alike it is a perfect enigma how the primal Dead Sea of the undistinguished absolute should have escaped from its motionless calm and bestirred itself to any intelligible result. As respects satisfying the demands of religion, it is quite evident that the colorless absolute of Schelling is entirely incompetent to provide for the sense of fellowship in which religion has its permanent life. Doubtless the thought of divine immanence has great worth for religious feeling, and pantheistic teaching like that of the "philosophy of identity" does emphasize the divine immanence. But in the long run the religious mind must make demands as to the character of the divine which is supposed to be immanent. What it wants is the Father of spirits, not an impersonal absolute in which the beating heart of love and sympathy can be placed only by an ill-disguised fiction.

As might be expected, the pantheistic standpoint of the "philosophy of identity" is shown to have its dubious bearings on questions of anthropology. Pantheism is intrinsically unfriendly to freedom in the sense of a power of real alternativity. And as a matter of fact the statements which Schelling put forth on this theme, at the pantheistic stage, are compromising. "Only such an act," he says, "as follows with absolute necessity from the essence of the soul or, what is the same thing, from the divine so far as it is the essence of the soul, is an absolutely free act. . . . In the soul as such there is no

freedom, but only the divine is truly free, and the essence of the soul so far as it is divine."[1] Here we have the assumption that freedom in its whole range is identical with necessity; an assumption which certainly does not tend to conserve the notion of freedom in its integrity. In like manner Schelling retrenches the idea of immortality. As identical with the primal essence the soul must indeed live on, but it is not immortal in the sense in which the term includes the persistence of individual existence. "For, since this cannot be thought apart from connection with the finite and the body, so would immortality in this sense be in truth only a perpetual mortality and no liberation, but rather a continued imprisonment of the soul."[2] That a liberation which extirpates individuality and leaves no place for a sense of personal identity is not to be counted any great boon Schelling himself seemed to realize at a later stage.

V.—The System of Hegel

Like his idealistic associates, Hegel considered the distinctive task of philosophy to consist in discovering and construing the all-embracing unity. With the Fichtean attempt to fulfill this task he could not reconcile himself, since it involved a too easy-going and arbitrary disposal of the objective world. To Schelling's conception of a neutral absolute coming to manifestation in the parallel streams of nature and spirit he could not long render his assent, as this conception seemed to him to afford no adequate account of movement and diversity, and also to fail of attributing to spirit its rightful supremacy. He therefore sought an improved interpretation of the absolute, that is, one in which the absolute, instead of

[1] System der gesammten Philosophie, Werke. VI. 539, 541.
[2] Philosophie und Religion, Werke, VI. 60.

figuring as a neutral background of the world process, is presented as subsisting in and through the world process; an interpretation also in which nature takes the rank of a factor or stage in the self-realization of spirit and is thus made subordinate.

According to a basal assumption of the Hegelian system the universe is not merely rational, or built according to a thought plan, but is thought itself. "God himself," says Hegel, "exists in his proper truth only in thought and as thought."[1] A thinker he defines as "thought conceived as a subject."[2] He considers it admissible to speak of nature as "the system of unconscious thought, or, to use Schelling's expression, a fossilized intelligence."[3] In comprehensive terms he declares, "Everything we know, both of outward and inward nature, is in its own self the same as it is in thought."[4] According to a second assumption equally distinctive, thought is an organism in which all the parts or members are so related that each demands the whole and can be contemplated in its full truth only in relation to the whole. To isolate a part is to put it out of the plane of reality and make it abstract. A lower category never affords a point of rest. A complement is demanded in a higher category, and so on to the highest, the absolute idea, the category of self-consciousness, wherein all the other categories find their unity and proper significance. The movement from the lower to the higher is dialectic; that is, it proceeds by contradiction and reconciliation. Thus the idea of "pure being" is confronted immediately by the idea of "nothing," and the union of the two gives the idea of "becoming." In the same way the other categories, or fundamental concepts,

[1] Logic, chap. ii, p. 28, in trans. by Wallace.
[2] Ibid., p. 30. [3] Ibid., p. 39. [4] Ibid., p. 37.

are evolved until the crown of the hierarchy is reached. For the consummation of the movement of thought three great stages are required, corresponding to which are the three principal branches of philosophy: logic, the science of the idea in itself; the philosophy of nature, the science of the idea in the reflection of itself; the philosophy of mind or spirit, the science of the idea in its return to itself from its self-estrangement in nature. As passing on through different stages the evolution of thought may seem to involve a time element, but it is probable that Hegel meant to predicate succession in the logical rather than in the temporal sense, though a question may be rasied as to whether the philosopher kept with entire consistency to this point of view.[1]

Philosophical method, as Hegel maintained, is properly determined by the nature of the universe as the complete system or organism of thought. The great demand in philosophical thinking is to produce a rescript of thought in its essential relations, a rescript which by the nature of the case will be no fanciful structure, but a true mirror of reality. To meet this demand the thinker must give himself over to the impulsion of thought and permit himself to be carried in its direction. In true thinking, says Hegel, "we renounce our selfish and particular being, sink ourselves in the thing, allow thought to follow its own course, and if we add anything of our own we think ill."[2] Using the words of Professor Paulsen, we may give a succinct description of Hegel's conception of philosophical method as follows: "Reality as such is thought, an idea unfolding itself with inner necessity. Perfect knowledge consists in thinking the actual thoughts over again. In the dialectical evolu-

[1] Logic, chap. ii, p. 41. Compare Philosophy of Religion, I. 33.

[2] Compare McTaggart, Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic, pp. 166–176; Zeller, Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Leibniz, pp. 792, 793.

tion of philosophical thinking the self-existent and active absolute idea is repeated, or rather becomes conscious of itself."[1] The emphatically *a priori* character of the philosophical construction which conforms to this pattern is quite apparent.

In the application of philosophical tests critics have found various faults in the Hegelian system. They have noticed that its assumption of the self-evolving nature of thought is without any good warrant; that it is not a mere thought element which calls up its opposite, or a spontaneous movement of thought by which two notions are united in a third; that what really achieves this is a true self, or thinking agent, which has had experience of reality in its fullness and complexity, and so cannot rest in the partial and isolated. Again, the charge has been made against the Hegelian system that it fails to distinguish consistently between the simply logical and the metaphysical or ontological. "Hegel," says Professor Seth, "systematically and in the most subtle fashion confounds these two points of view, and ends by offering us a *logic* as a *metaphysic*."[2] Still further, the Hegelian system has been criticised as providing no intelligible account of the transition from the ideal to the sensible, from the realm of categories to the realm of a material manifold in space and time. Hegel, it is claimed, has simply made a resolute leap across "the ugly broad ditch." He has made a bridge of nothing better than metaphorical phrases. "His passage from logic to nature is to the full as mythological as anything we find in Plato."[3]

These criticisms, it strikes us, are not without sub-

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[1] Introductions to Philosophy, p. 21.
[2] Seth, Hegelianism and Personality, p.104.
[3] Ibid., p. 113.

stantial foundations; but, not dwelling upon them, we will notice some grounds of objection to the Hegelian system which may be urged both from a philosophical and a religious point of view. In the first place, the system is chargeable with a one-sided intellectualism. Under the constraint of an imperious ambition to secure a completely unified view of reality it confines reality within the terms of a definition that is distinctly too narrow. Thought cannot be admitted to be another name for being. One might as well join Schopenhauer in reducing all to will as side with Hegel in reducing all to thought. Will in a rational universe may be presumed, indeed, to act in conformity with the demands of reason or thought, but only by giving to thought an unnatural breadth of meaning can it be made to include what customary speech denotes by will. My thought of a given possible act is one thing; my willing, or putting forth of energy, which consummates the act, is a different thing. Again, the thought which I entertain about certain matters of conduct may be fairly correct, while my attitude of will in relation to the same matters may be decidedly perverse. To merge the latter in the former is, accordingly, compromising to an ethical or religious interest as well as metaphysically defective. The same remark applies to the slighting treatment which Hegel accords to the element of feeling. He renders even less scanty justice to this element than to that of will. While his general postulates are implicitly adverse to accrediting to will its proper province, he explicitly disparages the office of feeling. "The form of feeling," he says, "is the lowest in which spiritual truth can be expressed."[1] Again he remarks: "God exists essentially in thought. The suspicion that he exists through thought, and only

[1] Logic, chap. ii, p. 28.

in thought, must occur to us from the mere fact that man alone has religion, not the beasts."[1] This certainly is in amazing contrast with the biblical statements, which represent God as no less alive, and no less rich, in the element of feeling than in that of intelligence. And plainly the reason of the case is with the biblical representation. A plenitude of the nobler order of feelings is an immense factor in the inner wealth of the normal man. By a thoroughly warrantable inference we may conclude that personality in its highest range cannot be destitute of this kind of wealth, for the source of our nature cannot be poor in that which enters so largely into our riches. Hegelianism cannot be said to make even a plausible case for its one-sided intellectualism.

In the second place, the Hegelian system is open to criticism on the score of its ambiguous treatment of the subject of the personality of God. It contains, indeed, no denial of this great theistic postulate. On the contrary, some of its representations are capable of being interpreted as implying divine personality. Thus the stress which is placed upon self-consciousness, as the supreme category, can easily suggest that this distinctive characteristic of personality must be attributed to God. Furthermore, sentences occur which look like formal assertions that God is true person. "The Christian God," says Hegel, "is God not known merely, but also self-knowing; he is a personality not merely figured in our minds, but rather absolutely actual."[2] Again, referring to Spinoza's doctrine, he says: "Though an essential stage in the evolution of the idea, substance is not the same as absolute idea, but the idea under the still limited form of necessity. It is true that God is necessity, or,

[1] Philosophy of Religion, I. 132.

[2] Logic, chap viii, p. 233.

as we may put it, that he is the absolute thing or fact; he is, however, no less the absolute person. That he is the absolute person, however, is a truth which the philosophy of Spinoza never perceived; and on that side it falls short of the true notion of God which forms the content of the religious consciousness in Christianity." To have completed his view Spinoza should have added to the Oriental conception of the unity of substance the Occidental principle of individuality.[1] But, in spite of declarations apparently so unequivocal, Hegel affords grounds for doubt as to his dogmatic intention. We are left to question whether he designs to attribute to God a proper consciousness of his own, or merely such a consciousness as is mediated through finite spirits. The latter meaning is at least suggested in such statements as these: "God knows himself in the finite spirit."[2] "The self-consciousness of God knows itself in man's knowing."[3] "This vast congeries of volitions, interests, and activities [displayed in history] constitutes the instruments and means of the world-spirit for attaining its object; bringing it to consciousness, and realizing it. And this aim is none other than finding itself, coming to itself, and contemplating itself in concrete actuality."[4] "History in general is the development of spirit in time, as nature is the development of the idea in space."[5] Along with these statements may be placed others which if they do not directly testify on the mode of the divine consciousness, do serve to raise the query as to whether God has any other than a purely immanent being, such as may naturally be regarded as implying only a mediated consciousness, or

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[1] Logic, chap. viii, p. 236. [2] Philosophy of Religion, II. 327, 328.
[3] Vorlesungen ueber die Beweise vom Daseyn Gottes.
[4] Philosophy of History, pp. 24–27. [5] Ibid., p. 75.

one brought to realization in finite spirits, whose thought of God is taken to signify God's thought of himself. Thus Hegel says of the idea, which he makes to be *God as he is in himself:* "Everything actual, in so far as it is true, is the idea, and has its truth by and in virtue of the idea alone. Every individual being is some one aspect of the idea."[1] "The truth is that there is only one reason, one spirit; that spirit as finite has no true existence."[2] As appears in these citations, Hegel was minded to make room for but one subject in the universe. That everything should be referred to one subject he regarded as the demand of unity. So he preferred to speak, not of the Divine Spirit and of human spirits, but simply of spirit. In some of his propositions the reality of finite spirits seems to be seriously abridged; in other infinite spirit seems to be conditioned, in respect of content, upon the experience of finite spirits. On the whole, it must be said that Hegel has left the question of the proper personality of God in a dubious light. Discriminating critics, like Seth and Zeller, have opportunity to question his fidelity, on this subject, to the Christian standpoint. The latter remarks: "Hegel's expressions relative to the personality of God have such an indefinite sound that it is difficult to extract from them his real meaning. However, if account is taken of his philosophy as a whole, it will appear that for him the essential meaning of this item of faith was only the fact of God's becoming personal in human personality."[3]

A third criticism upon the Hegelian system concerns the dependent relation toward the world in which it places God. Whatever ambiguity may attach to Hegel's thought respecting the divine personality, it is quite

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[1] Logic, chap ix p 305. [2] Philosophy of Religion, III. 77.
[3] Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie seit Leibniz, p 834.

certain that he conceived of the mundane process as a necessary means of self-realization on the part of God. The trinity which he predicates is intramundane rather than transcendent or extramundane. It relates to the stages of a cosmic process which are likewise stages in the self-realization of spirit. Now, it is quite evident that a theory of this sort is remote from the platform of catholic Christianity. It may well be claimed also that there are good grounds for preferring the latter. Surely it is the higher conception which represents God as being self-sufficient through the independent possession of trinitarian life and then describes the world as the product of freedom and intelligence, a sphere of being which fulfills, indeed, the far-reaching purpose of God but does not condition his subsistence in any such sense as he conditions its being.

VI.—Tendencies Derived From the Post-Kantian Idealism

The review which has been given has sufficiently indicated that, under the category of adverse tendencies, each of the prominent forms of this idealism may be charged with rendering support to pantheism. Fichte's denial of personality to God coincided with the characteristic assumption of Occidental pantheism, and was more than once cited by the advocates of pantheistic teaching. It is not to be overlooked, however, that Fichte's stress upon the moral will provided somewhat of a counterpoise to the pantheistic incentives furnished by his system; since, undoubtedly a stress of this kind is congenially related to a theistic conception, as being the one conception which makes room for freedom back of the world, and so for freedom in the world. The adaptation of Schelling's philosophy, in one of its stages, to

promote a pantheistic propagandism was illustrated by several of his disciples. Thus Lorenz Oken merged philosophy into a theory of nature and identified God with the universe.

While the Hegelian philosophy numbered adherents—such as Gabler, Göschel, Hinrichs, and Marheineke—who regarded it as reconcilable with Christian orthodoxy, it also served as the starting-point of radicalisms of the most extreme and anti-Christian character. That Hegelianism was responsible for the whole brood cannot fairly be asserted. Still it must be admitted that the sweeping attempt of that philosophy to reduce everything to a unified point of view afforded a certain stimulus to extreme theories. Disciples who varied from the standpoint of the master were not less insistent than the master in accommodating the whole round of facts to the chosen standpoint. So we have in criticism schemes as radical as those of David Friedrich Strauss and Bruno Bauer; in religious philosophy, the ultra teaching of Ludwig Feuerbach which left no place for any God beyond the human race; in psychological theory, the emphatic sensationalism, not to say materialism, of both Strauss and Feuerbach; in socialistic speculation, the theories of F. J. G. Lassalle and Karl Marx. A closer consideration of the views of some of these men will be given later. The mention of their names here serves to indicate either that Hegel was unfortunate in his following or that his philosophy was not so thoroughly friendly to the Christian system as he assumed it to be.

CHAPTER II

RADICAL SENSATIONALISM AND MATERIALISM

I.—The Sensational Psychology—Its Leading Representatives and its Distinguishing Features

In introducing the theme of the preceding chapter occasion was found to disclaim any intention to disparage idealism or to question its compatibility, even in its radical forms, with the Christian faith. For the theme of the present chapter a disclaimer of this kind is not seriously demanded. Judged by their content, radical sensationalism and materialism can be seen to stand in the way of assigning to man such attributes and such a position in the world as are agreeable to the Christian point of view. Moreover, in actual history—at least in that of more recent times—they have exhibited a distinct tendency to ignore or to set aside the Christian system. Among the prominent representatives of radical sensationalism in the nineteenth century a few may have indulged in appreciative references to one or another Christian truth; but not one of them stands revealed as a cordial friend of the Christian faith. As for nineteenth century materialism, where it has come to undisguised expression it has almost uniformly treated Christianity as quite outside the province of rational belief.

The most conspicuous field of the sensational psychology in the last century was supplied by Great Britain. Very radical doctrines in the line of that psychology had been advocated by writers of the preceding century,

especially by Hume and Hartley. Among those who appropriated these doctrines and industriously championed them four men have taken a preëminent rank, namely, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Alexander Bain, and Herbert Spencer. While Jeremy Bentham was in a sense the forerunner of the group, his attention was directed rather to ethics and to civic reforms than to the elaboration of psychological theory. Other writers might be mentioned, particularly G. H. Lewes, but there is no cogent ground for making any specific reference to their views, since the full scheme of the sensational psychology can be reviewed in the works of the four principal champions mentioned. Within this list John Stuart Mill claims a special interest on account of the admissions which his candor and mental alertness led him ultimately to make against the scheme which fell to him by inheritance. Relative to Herbert Spencer, it may be noticed that in his attempt to found a cosmic philosophy he went beyond the province of the school which is here under consideration, so that there will be occasion to give attention to his speculations in another connection as well as in the present.

Proceeding now to a rapid characterization of the sensational psychology, as taught by its foremost representatives in Great Britian, we notice, in the first place, its resolute denial of all *a priori* elements of knowledge, and its reference of the entire mental content to experience. It unhesitatingly adopted the *tabula rasa* doctrine, according to which the mind, essentially blank in itself, derives its entire fund of materials through the senses. It contributes nothing out of itself to the structure of knowledge. As John Stuart Mill asserts, it does not originally contain so much as the principle of contradiction. All the so-called necessary truths, so far

from being dictated by the constitution of the mind, are the product of experience. Mill supposes them to be the product of individual experience. Spencer differs from Mill and the earlier members of the school in making them the product of race experience—in a sense *a priori* for the individual as being given to him, but *a posteriori* for the entire series of individuals.[1] In the view of Spencer no less than of Mill they are no original datum of mind. Instead of being the logical antecedent of experience, they are the product or result of experience.

In the second place, the sensational psychology under review exhibits a decided bent to subsume experience under the category of sensations or feelings, making these the units of the mental life and postulating nothing aside from them and their relations. James Mill speaks of feeling as including "every phenomenon of the mind," and construes ideas as transformed sensations.[2] "My mind," says John Stuart Mill, "is but a series of feelings, a thread of consciousness, however supplemented by believed possibilities of consciousness which are not, although they might be, realized."[3] "Mind," says Herbert Spencer, "consists of feelings and the relations among feelings."[4]

In the third place, it is characteristic of the sensational psychology to lay great stress upon the association of ideas as the means by which the mind is furnished with its habitual points of view—its so-called intuitions or necessary beliefs. Defining the teaching of his school on this subject, John Stuart Mill makes the following summary of the laws of association: "(1) Similar phenomena tend to be thought of together. (2) Phe-

[1] Principles of Psychology, II. 414, edition of 1876.
[2] Leslie Stephen, The English Utilitarians, II. 290.
[3] Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 207.
[4] Data of Ethics, p. 104.

nomena which have either been experienced or conceived in close contiguity to one another tend to be thought of together. (3) Associations produced by contiguity become more certain and rapid by repetition. (4) When an association has acquired this character of inseparability, when the bond between the two ideas has been thus firmly riveted, not only does the idea called up by association become, in our consciousness, inseparable from the idea which suggested it, but the facts or phenomena answering to those ideas come at last to seem inseparable in existence: things which we are unable to conceive apart, appear incapable of existing apart, and the belief we have in their coexistence, though really a product of experience, seems intuitive."[1]

In the fourth place, it is distinctive of the sensational psychology to question the fact of a conscious self. This point may not have been put explicitly by Professor Bain, and may have been qualified in the exposition of John Stuart Mill. Still there was an evident inclination on the part of the sensational school to follow Hume in substituting for the self-knowing agent a mere succession of feelings or psychical phenomena. The definition of mind as "a series of feelings," which was cited above from Mill, is quite in line with Hume's negation of the conscious self, and with Herbert Spencer we find an express denial of the possibility of any direct consciousness of the self. "A true cognition of self," he says, "implies a state in which the knowing and the known are one, in which subject and object are identified, and this Mr. Mansel rightly holds to be the annihilation of both."[2]

Once more, the sensational psychology exhibits a

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[1] Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 191.
[2] First Principles, p. 65.

decided affiliation with necessitarianism. Professor Bain, it is true, made room for an element of spontaneity in the human constitution; but his description of this element does not seem to identify it with a proper capability of choice or power of alternativity pertaining to a conscious agent. "Spontaneity," he says, "expresses the fact that the active organs may pass into movement, apart from the stimulus of sensation."[1] James Mill is credited with rating free will as "nonsense."[2] John Stuart Mill questioned the right to assume the fact of any direct control over the volitions, and placed events of this order on the same plane with physical events as respects relations to determining antecedents. "A volition," he says, "is a moral effect, which follows the corresponding moral causes as certainly and invariably as physical effects follow their physical causes. Whether it *must* do so I acknowledge myself to be entirely ignorant, be the phenomena moral or physical. All I know is that it always does."[3] Herbert Spencer characterized the sense of free will as an illusion, and urged against the fact of free will the requirement of conserving due credit to his treatise on psychology, as also to similar treatises. "Psychical changes," he remarked, "either conform to law or they do not. If they do not conform to law this work, in common with all works on the subject, is sheer nonsense; no science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law there cannot be any such thing as free will."[4]

Sensationalism, in its compromising bearing upon the recognition of a true mental agent, has a certain kinship with materialism. It is to be observed, however,

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[1] Mental Science, p. 318, edition of 1868.
[2] Stephen, The English Utilitarians, II. 313.
[3] Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 501.
[4] Principles of Psychology, I. 503.

that a confessed preference for materialism has not been characteristic of the school to which consideration is here given. Its representatives in general have emphasized the broad contrast which, to our apprehension, subsists between mental facts and physical facts. As respects the teaching of John Stuart Mill, it is more properly described as leaning to idealism than as affiliating with materialism. Alexander Bain made large account of the physiological basis or accompaniment of the mental life, and also spoke betimes in a rather apologetic vein for the champions of materialism; but in his concluding statement, in place of materialism pure and simple, he adopted the monistic conception. "The one substance," he says, "with two sets of properties, two sides, the physical and the mental—a double-faced unity—would appear to comply with all the exigencies of the case."[1] Herbert Spencer's theory may also be characterized as formally monistic. He assumed the existence of one primordial force or substance, the manifestations of which fall into two aggregates "constituting the world of consciousness and the world beyond consciousness."[2] Furthermore, he considered, although confessing the absence of strict proof, that it is agreeable to experience to suppose feeling and nervous action to be "inner and outer faces of the same change."[3] In consideration of the fact that both the mental and the physical are manifestations of an unknown ground, he rated the controversy between the materialist and the spiritualist as a war of words.[4] It is not to be overlooked, however, that he has scarcely succeeded in maintaining a neutral attitude toward the controversy. Much in his writings is certainly adapted to convey the impression that mind, so

[1] Mind and Body, p. 196.
[2] First Principles, p. 156
[3] Principles of Psychology, I. 128.
[4] First Principles, pp 556, 557.

far as discoverable in the universe, has its efficient antecedent, or real source, in physical energy. Whether consistently or not, he has accorded a certain primacy to matter.

As has been intimated, the attitude of the sensational school toward the Christian and theistic faith was by no means cordial. When not hostile it was cold and negative. Herbert Spencer was willing, indeed, to grant large liberties to religion in what he considered its appropriate province, the field of the unknown, at least on condition that religion should confess utter ignorance of its supreme objects. We find, however, in a late writing of John Stuart Mill the most distinct concessions to fundamental points of theism and Christianity that are on record from the pen of any prominent representative of the school. In his essay on Theism, while he emphasized the difficulty of reconciling the goodness of God with his omnipotence, he admitted a balance of evidence on the side of creation by intelligence, denied that science has any refutation of the doctrine of immortality, and confessed that religion has made a discreet choice in fixing upon Christ as the ideal representative and guide of humanity. That herein he went beyond the commonly recognized standpoint of his school is evinced by the fact that his disciples were somewhat scandalized by the essay on Theism.[1]

II.—Failure of the Sensational Psychology

Whether the sensational psychology be judged by fundamental rational demands, or by the success of its advocates in maintaining agreement with their own premises, it offers very scanty claims to appreciation. On the side of rational demands it offends against a sane conception

[1] Stephen, The English Utilitarians, III. 433.

of the conditions of mental experience. It is simply turning experience into a magician when it is given credit for every characteristic and item of the mental content. Experience surely is not something that floats *in vacuo*. In order to experience there must be that which experiences. In order to community in experience there must be a plurality of beings fundamentally alike as respects their constitution. It contradicts the principle of sufficient reason to suppose that men universally must, or that they assuredly do, follow certain lines of rational procedure without being put upon those lines by inner and essential characteristics of being. Granting that a common environment may work toward community of mental habits, we must still hold that environment can be efficient for a given result in a plurality of individuals only on the score of a definite coördination between the outer and the inner; and this means, of course, that the inner or mental sphere has characteristics of its own. In short, in analyzing away the mind, as the sensational psychologists really do in at least some of their utterances, they take away the intelligible ground for the experience from which they endeavor to derive all the laws and necessities as well as the concrete items of the mental life.

More specifically, the sensational psychology offends against a reasonable account of that unity of consciousness which is presupposed in even the elementary forms of mental activity. Discrimination and combination lie at the very beginning of cognition and condition it at every step of progress. But how is discrimination or combination conceivable apart from a unitary psychical agent, which, in its capability of being present to several terms, can isolate them from one another or bring them into conjunction, now taking note of this, now of that,

and now recalling a term as one previously recognized? Under the definition of mind as a mere series of feelings this entire process would seem to be outlawed. A series, such as that in question, has no existence except in its present member; that is, it has no actual existence at all as a series, but only a conceptional existence. The past feeling, as simply nonexistent, cannot, of course, exercise any agency, whether of discrimination or combination. As for the present feeling, if it is to recall the past feeling and discriminate itself from it or combine itself with it, then it passes far beyond the rank of a simple feeling and takes on the character of a conscious subject, being made to fulfill under another name the role of a real agent. Openly or surreptitiously the conscious subject, the real agent, is bound to be introduced. It cannot be dispensed with in an exposition of the simplest facts of the mental life. The supposition that evolution releases from the necessity of postulating such an agent is much like the mythological attempt to find a firm support for the earth by placing it upon an elephant, and the elephant upon a tortoise. Evolution cannot dispense with the indispensable. Rational experience, involving as it does at its very initiation acts of discrimination and combination, can neither begin nor continue apart from a real subject, a unitary psychical agent.

A serious ground for objection lies against the sensational psychology on the score of its rank necessitarianism. In canceling freedom it cancels the intelligible ground of proper moral distinctions. Room may be left for æsthetic distinctions. Some forms of conduct may be adapted to produce spontaneous impressions of unseemliness and ugliness, others to excite impressions of seemliness and beauty. But all, as being equally necessitated,

are on a perfect parity as respects praiseworthiness or blameworthiness, and to speak of responsibility for any of them is like ascribing responsibility to the nettle for being a nettle, or to the rose for being a rose. Trouble is also made for the theory of knowledge by this sweeping denial of freedom. If every act is determined, if nothing is left to a better or worse use of free agency, then false judgments have the same basis as the true. All alike are dictated by the nature of things, and the conclusion follows, not merely that it is difficult to fix upon a standard for the discrimination of truth from error, but even to conceive that there can be such a standard. As for Herbert Spencer's plea in behalf of necessity, cited above, if it is not, as characterized by Professor James, "beneath criticism,"[1] it is certainly far from being weighty. It is not warrantable to assume either that man was made for the convenience of the psychologist or that his freedom makes him an impossible subject for psychological treatment. Only a psychology that is bent upon seeing nothing in the universe but mechanism is ruled out by the supposition of freedom. Freedom may, indeed, transcend law as it applies to mechanisms, but who is qualified to say offhand that it is not in accordance with one of the higher laws of the universe that personalities should subsist which are above the plane of mechanism as being dowered with a power of initiation? The possession of such a power may interfere with the certain forecast of conduct; but who pretends to be able to write biographies in advance? Probability has been characterized as the guide of life, and free beings are subjects for probable conclusions, since motives, if not in strictness causes of conduct, are yet persuasives. Political science asks for no more defi-

[1] Principles of Psychology, II. 576.

nite basis than this, and psychology has no call to fret over the lack of mechanical exactness in a sphere to which it is foreign.

The difficulty on the part of leading representatives of the sensational psychology, in adhering to their own premises, has been pretty amply illustrated. John Stuart Mill has furnished some striking instances. Referring to the definition of mind current in his school, he added: "If we speak of the mind as a series of feelings, we are obliged to complete the statement by calling it a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future; and we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind, or ego, is something different from a series of feelings, or possibilities of them, or of accepting the paradox that something which *ex hypothesi* is but a series of feelings can be aware of itself as a series."[1] Again he remarked: "There is a bond of some sort among all the parts of the series which makes me say that they were the feelings of a person who was the same person throughout, and this bond, to me, constitutes my ego."[2] In making such admissions Mill seems to have opened a trapdoor in the floor of his own philosophy.[3] He as much as confessed that the atomistic conception of mind with which he set out must be rated as inadequate. "When Mill," says Höffding, "recognizes the uniting bond as equally real with the particular elements he corrects the entire conception of consciousness from which Hume, and, following him, James Mill, had started. The laws of association are now seen to be nothing more than special forms of the uniting principle."[4]

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[1] Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy, p. 213.
[2] Notes on James Mill's Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind, II. 175.
[3] Masson, Recent British Philosophy, p. 215.
[4] History of Modern Philosophy, II. 415, 416.

Illustration has also been given by Herbert Spencer of the difficulty of maintaining a consistent and straightforward adherence to the demands of the sensational creed. As Thomas Hill Green has noted, he smuggles in the unity of consciousness which he assumes to deduce.[1] As Professor Bowne has pointed out, though he had made the mental order the resultant of the physical order, and characterized the notion of free will as pure illusion, he yet, in his argument with the idealist, brings back the ego as a real agent. "It is no longer a series of faint impressions, or the inner side of nerve motions, but a true source of energy, and the warrant for affirming a thing-series, apart from the thought-series, is found in the fact that our energy is resisted by an energy not our own."[2] Furthermore, Spencer seems to have afforded means of controverting his own assertion that nothing can be subject and object at once, which he urges against the possibility of direct self-consciousness. While he defines consciousness as the sum of our psychical states, and affirms that the absolute is manifested in all our psychical and physical states alike, he maintains that there is in us not merely a negative, but a positive, though indefinite consciousness of the absolute.[3] Now, in saying that the absolute is manifested in the states mentioned, Spencer obviously meant to imply that it is the ultimate or true subject of the states. Therefore, as being manifested in every psychical state, the absolute is the subject of all consciousness; accordingly, it is the subject of the particular consciousness of which it is the object—that is, subject and object at once.

Clearer illustration of the bankruptcy of the sensational psychology could not well be given than that which

[1] Works, I. 438–440. [2] Metaphysics, revised edition, pp. 319, 320.
[3] First Principles, pp. 65, 88–92, 156, 157; Principles of Psychology, I. 627, II. 503.

has been furnished by its own representatives. It has suffered the hard, but appropriate, fate of being discredited in the house of its friends.

III.—A Question as to the Genuine Representatives of Materialism

Somewhat of an incentive to the spread of materialistic theories was naturally furnished by the great advance in the physical sciences which began to be made near to the middle of the nineteenth century. Absorbed in this line of studies, and elated by the discoveries made, various minds experienced a temptation to assign to the physical point of view a preëminent or even exclusive place in the interpretation of the universe. The tendency thus evoked was reinforced, at least in some quarters, by a reaction from the great speculative systems of the early part of the century. Not a few were made to feel that the practical achievements of these systems fell vastly short of their lofty claims.

A relative decline of interest in the fundamental questions of metaphysics ensued. An opportunity was thus provided for the insinuation of materialistic thinking; for, as Professor Eucken has remarked, "materialism, powerless against every scientific philosophy, always steps forward instantly in a time of speculative exhaustion."[1]

Among scientific writers of any considerable note distinct professions of the unadulterated creed of materialism have been rather infrequent. Even where they have given expression to points which the most thoroughgoing materialist is wont to assert they have hesitated formally to subscribe to the materialistic scheme in its totality. Accordingly, a question of classification ob-

[1] The Fundamental Concepts of Modern Philosophy, Eng. trans., p. 123.

trudes itself. We need to inquire whether this or that name, conspicuous in recent literature, belongs in the list of genuine materialists.

If we take this inquiry into English territory no name will be more readily called up than that of Thomas H. Huxley. It takes but little search to reveal the fact that he was free to express himself in such terms as might be employed by a stanch materialist. Taken as they stand, the following statements seem certainly to favor the materialistic theory: "As every future grows out of past and present, so will the physiology of the future gradually extend the realm of matter and law until it is coëxtensive with knowledge, with feeling, and with action."[1] "What we call the operations of the mind are functions of the brain, and the materials of consciousness are products of cerebral activity."[2] "There is every reason to believe that consciousness is a function of nervous matter, when that nervous matter has attained a certain degree of organization, just as we know the other 'actions to which the nervous system ministers,' such as reflex action and the like, to be."[3] "If these positions [set forth in an article on Conscious Automatism] are well based, it follows that our mental conditions are simply symbols of consciousness of the changes which take place automatically in the organism; and that, to take an extreme illustration, the feeling we call volition is not the cause of the voluntary act, but the symbol of the state of the brain which is the immediate cause of that act."[4] But, in spite of all this stress on the primacy and efficacy of matter, Huxley refuses to be classified as a material-

[1] Collected Essays, I. 159 f., cited by James Ward in Naturalism and Agnosticism, I. 17.
[2] Collected Essays, VI. 94, cited by Edward Clodd in Life of Huxley, p. 116.
[3] Darwiniana, p. 162.
[4] Cited by Ward, I. 179.

ist. He notices that in the ultimate analysis matter and motion are names for phenomena of consciousness, so that the making of mental phenomena the products of material phenomena amounts to an assertion that one order of phenomena of consciousness may be presumed to be preceded by another order.[1] He expresses his sense of the groundlessness of materialism in these strong words: "I understand the main tenet of materialism to be that there is nothing in the universe but matter and force; and that all the phenomena of nature are explicable by deduction from the properties assignable to these two primitive factors. . . . But all this I heartily disbelieve. In the first place, it seems to me pretty plain that there is a third thing in the universe, to wit, consciousness, which, in the hardness of my heart or head, I cannot see to be matter or force, or any conceivable modification of either, however intimately the manifestations of the phenomena of consciousness may be connected with the phenomena known as matter and force. In the second place, the arguments used by Descartes and Berkeley to show that our certain knowledge does not extend beyond our states of consciousness appear to me as irrefragable now as they did when I first became acquainted with them some half century ago. All the materialistic writers I know of who have tried to bite that file have simply broken their teeth. But, if this is true, our one certainty is the existence of the mental world, and that of *Kraft und Stoff* falls into the rank of, at best, a highly probable hypothesis."[2] Accordingly, he testifies, "If I were forced to choose between materialism and idealism I should certainly elect for the latter."[3] It is to be noticed, further, that he repudiates the anti-

[1] Collected Essays, VI. 94, 95, cited by Clodd
[2] Essays upon Some Controverted Questions, 1892, pp. 171, 172.
[3] Ibid., p. 174.

theistic dogmatism largely characteristic of materialism as "not merely baseless, but impertinent."[1] We seem to be restrained, therefore, from numbering Huxley among materialists. Following his own choice of names, we might call him an *agnostic;* but we should have reason to add that for an agnostic he said too much which looks like an assurance of the primacy of matter over mind.

In his famous address at Belfast John Tyndall used words which may be understood to be a declaration of materialistic faith. The passage which probably elicited most remark was the following: "Believing as I do in the continuity of nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that matter which we, in our own ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial life."[2] On the other hand, Tyndall strongly emphasized the utter contrast between the physical and the mental. "The passage," he says, "from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from the one phenomenon to the other."[3] Again, he rated as inconceivable the notion that atoms which individually are destitute of thought and sensa-

[1] Essays upon Some Controverted Questions, pp. 26, 27.
[2] Address, revised edition, pp. 58, 59.
[3] Cited by Romanes in Mind, Motion, and Monism, p. 64.

tion should by their combination give thought and sensation.[1] Furthermore, he intimated that he had as little ambition as Huxley to espouse antitheistic dogmatism. Referring to the doctrine of "material atheism," he added: "I have noticed during years of self-observation that it is not in hours of clearness and vigor that this doctrine commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part."[2] On the whole, it appears that Tyndall did not hold a clear-cut materialistic creed, and was able to view matter as a sufficient source of all terrestrial life only by putting into matter a mystical and indefinable meaning.

At the time when he wrote his Candid Examination of Theism, G. J. Romanes was disposed to maintain that a sufficient explanation of everything in the world may be found in the persistence of force and the primary qualities of matter. While not very definite, this language implies a certain affiliation with the materialistic point of view. Near the close of his life he recovered his theistic faith. In his ultimate psychological theory he endeavored to combine the materialistic and the spiritualistic points of view. Unhappily, the resulting monism took the least credible of all forms, that of an identification of physical and mental phenomena. Defining the chosen form, he said: "This theory is that mental phenomena and physical phenomena, although apparently diverse, are really identical."[3] This looks very much like saying that unlike appearances are identical appearances. The theory is staggering to the mind's power of conception. As Professor Ladd remarks: "It is not simply

[1] Belfast Address, p 38. [2] Preface to Belfast Address.
[3] Mind, Motion, and Monism, p. 83.

true that to identify these two kinds of phenomena—phenomena of the motion of material atoms and phenomena of change in mental states—is difficult for the average mind, but attainable by the scientific observer; it is rather true that no mind can frame any intelligible idea of what would be meant by identifying the two."[1] In the passage cited, Romanes, by identifying physical and mental phenomena, seems to have placed the two upon a parity. It may be noticed, however, that he sometimes indulged in expressions which imply the primacy of mind—expressions that lie very close to a pronounced idealism. "According to monism," he observes, "all matter in motion is mind; and, therefore, matter in motion is merely the objective revelation *to* us and *for* us, of that which in its subjective aspect—or in its ultimate reality—is mind. . . . Everywhere the reality may be psychical, and the physical symbolic; everywhere matter in motion may be the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."[2] Evidently the mind from which these sentences issued was not anchored in materialism.

Under the peculiar term "mind-stuff" Professor W. K. Clifford has been thought to give harborage to materialistic suppositions. As summarized by himself, his main thoughts are these: "(1) Matter is a mental picture in which mind-stuff is the thing represented. (2) Reason, intelligence, and volition are properties of a complex which is made up of elements themselves not rational, not intelligent, not conscious."[3] His editor, F. Pollock, interprets these statements as significant of an idealistic monism. It is not to be denied, however, that the ideal-

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[1] Elements of Physiological Psychology, pp. 589, 590.
[2] Mind, Motion, and Monism, pp. 111, 114.
[3] Lectures and Essays, second edition, p. 286.

ism which they inclose, if indeed the term is applicable, is of a special kind as making consciousness and intelligence late and limited products in the universe. As Professor Clifford taught, the elements of the mind-stuff themselves are totally void of this order of attributes or activities. Only in connection with such an organism as the brain do they have any subsistence. In the lack of evidence of a cosmic or universal brain structure it follows that the theistic conception is unfounded. So Clifford seems to have concluded, though expressing his reverence for the conception and his sense of its great practical worth. Speaking of those who have felt compelled to part with the thought of a personal God, he said: "We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven to light up a soulless earth; we have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion is dead."[1] We conclude that, while not formally materialistic, Clifford's scheme, in its derivation of the conscious and intelligent from the unconscious and nonintelligent, has a prominent point of affiliation with materialism. Romanes noticed the bearing of this item both in the teaching of Clifford and in that of Herbert Spencer. "The essential feature of materialism," he remarked, "remains untouched—namely, that what we know as mind is dependent (whether by way of causality or not is immaterial) on highly complex forms of *what we know* as matter, in association with highly peculiar distributions of *what we know* as force."[2]

In passing from England to Germany we enter a field which has witnessed, on the part of men of standing in science and literature, a more explicit and unequivocal advocacy of materialism. We find here, nevertheless,

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[1] Lectures and Essays, p. 389.
[2] A Candid Examination of Theism, Supplement, p. 188.

several prominent writers respecting whom a question of classification may be raised. This question applies first of all to Ludwig Feuerbach. Stated in brief the ascertained facts are these: The pronounced materialists in Germany in the latter part of the century recognized Feuerbach as the great oracle in philosophy, and counted him as being in an important sense their own forerunner. In an early statement of his standpoint he expressed his assent to a leading postulate of sensationalism. "I found my ideas," he said, "on materials which can be appropriated only through the activity of the senses."[1] Somewhat later, in reviewing Moleschott's Lehre der Nahrungsmittel, he penned these words: "Food becomes blood, blood becomes heart and brain, thoughts and mind-stuff. Man is what he eats."[2] Such a statement might very naturally be taken as an explicit declaration of the most unqualified materialism. Still, it is to be doubted whether Feuerbach would have consented to be classed as a materialist. His strong language may be in part explained by his penchant for smart hyperbolical sayings. While he was definitely committed to sensationalism, he was inclined to an agnostic position on the nature of the human spirit. His biographers represent him as refusing to subscribe formally either to materialism or spiritualism.[3] As will be noticed later, his scheme may be described as *positivism,* being quite analogous to that of Comte. Like his French contemporary, he had no real use for the notion of a personal God.

In his ultimate confession of belief, as it appears in his book entitled The Old Faith and the New, D. F. Strauss

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[1] The Essence of Christianity, Preface to second edition.
[2] Cited by Höffding, History of Modern Philosophy, II. 281.
[3] W. Bolin, Ludwig Feuerbach, seine Werken und seine Zeitgenossen, 1891; A. Levy, La Philosophie de Feuerbach, 1904.

put himself in line with Feuerbach both in his rejection of the theistic conception and in his apparent sanction of the materialistic theory. Ulrici has declared of his teaching at this stage that it was nothing but "naked atheism and materialism."[1] If acknowledging no God besides an impersonal cosmos stamps one as an atheist, then certainly Strauss earned that name. It is also certain that he indulged in expressions which furnish very plausible grounds for classifying him as a materialist. He pronounced the continued existence of the soul, after the destruction of the brain, to be as little conceivable as the existence of the center of a circle after the dissolution of its circumference.[2] He described life as "only a special, namely, the most complicated, kind of mechanics."[3] He intimated his conviction that the psychical may properly be referred to a purely physical source. Apparently forgetful of the fact that "heat" is a name for a sensation, he asked, "If, under certain conditions, motion is transformed into heat, why may it not, under other conditions, be transformed into sensation?"[4] As Strauss himself admitted that his conclusion had an appearance of "unmitigated materialism," there is little occasion to search for qualifying considerations. The most that can be said is that he placed more emphasis upon the proposition that man in body and soul is of one substance than upon the theory that this substance is definable in the proper terms of matter.

While Ernst Haeckel is very emphatic in styling himself a "monist" rather than a materialist, there is good reason for affirming that in the quality of his monism there lurks a large amount of materialism. That is the

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[1] Strauss as a Philosophical Thinker, Eng. trans., p. 78.
[2] The Old Faith and the New, sixth edition, Eng. trans., pp. 150, 151.
[3] Ibid., p. 199.
[4] Ibid., p. 240.

judgment of many German scholars. His claim that the monism which he represents is patterned after the pantheism of Spinoza is not allowed to pass without challenge. As Professor Adickes observes, he replaces the unitary substance of Spinoza with an aggregate, and substitutes for the conception of a parallelism between the corporeal and the mental a doctrine of the dependence of the latter upon the former.[1] He asserts in undisguised terms almost every proposition which has been made a shibboleth by recent materialism. At the same time it must be admitted that his teaching includes some elements that are no necessary part of a materialistic system. This is especially true of his hylozoism, or supposition that a kind of soul belongs to each of the atoms which make up the universe. On the whole, a recent manual of the history of philosophy probably comes as near to a true description as is practicable when it styles Haeckel's system an "inconsequent materialism."[2] We may therefore cite from him without compunction in a *résumé* of materialistic postulates, only reserving some special features of his thinking for notice under the topic of antitheistic evolutionism.

By general consent three writers belonging to the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century have been classified as champions of materialism pure and simple. These writers were Carl Vogt, Jacob Moleschott, and Ludwig Büchner. A question may, indeed, be raised as to whether one or another of them did not ultimately make some revision of his materialistic creed; but in case of all of them that which most prominently calls attention to their names is the fact of their outspoken advocacy

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[1] Kant contra Haeckel, Erkenntnistheorie gegen naturwissenschaftlichen Dogmatismus.

[2] Vorländer, Geschichte der Philosophie, II. 438.

of an unmitigated materialism. Among contemporaries in Germany who approximated to their platform were Heinrich Czolbe, J. C. Fischer, and Eduard Löwenthal.

In France materialism has had its representatives during the last century, but they can hardly be said to have vied in reputation with their predecessors of the preceding century, such as La Mettrie and Baron d'Holbach. Cabanis, who wrote in the last years of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth, used some very ultra materialistic phraseology in representing thought as a secretion of the brain[1]; but his consistent committal to the materialistic creed has been questioned.

In both Germany and France materialism has had considerable currency in the ranks of advanced socialists. This currency, however, cannot be taken as a measure of well-rooted conviction. Evidently antipathy to an established régime, which is thought to owe its life very largely to religious ideas and traditions, has helped to commend the materialistic system as appearing to be the negation of religion.

IV.—Cardinal Conclusions of Materialism

Four main conclusions are characteristic of the materialism of recent times. In the first place, it denies the substantial existence of mind, and describes all mental activities—thoughts, feelings, volitions—as products or functions of the material organism. On this point Vogt reproduces, not to say aggravates, the crude representation of Cabanis. "In my opinion," he says, "every investigator of nature will, in the use of consistent thinking, come to the view that all those capabilities which we include under the name of activities of soul are simply

[1] Ueberweg, History of Philosophy, II. 339.

functions of the brain substance, or, to employ a somewhat rude expression, that thoughts stand in the same relation to the brain as gall to the liver or urine to the kidneys."[1] Moleschott affirms that in the "strictest sense" the brain is the instrument or organ of thought. Taken according to his meaning, Vogt, he maintains, was entirely justified in employing the figure which he did. "Thought is a movement, a transposition of brain substance" (eine Umsetzung des Hirnstoffs).[2] Büchner admits that Vogt's illustration was badly chosen, as seeming to imply that thoughts are a palpable stuff; but of the absolute dependence of the mind upon the physical organism he makes no question. "The brain," he says, "is bearer and generator, or, better said, sole cause of thought. . . . Psychical activity is a function of the brain substance."[3] Haeckel shows very distinctly his judgment on the ontological subordination of the mental to the physical by repeated references to psychology as a branch of physiology.[4] More specifically he asserts the same judgment in such declarations as the following: "Consciousness, like feeling and willing, among the higher animals is a mechanical work of ganglion cells, and as such must be carried back to chemical and physical events in the plasma of these."[5] "We now know that the flame is a sum of electric vibrations of the ether, and the soul a sum of plasma movements in the ganglion cells."[6] "The 'soul' is merely a collective title for the sum total of man's cerebral functions; and these are just as much determined by physical and chemical processes as are any of the other

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[1] Physiologische Briefe für Gebildete aller Stände, pp. 323–325.
[2] Der Kreislauf des Lebens, second edition, pp. 385, 418, 419.
[3] Kraft und Stoff, tenth edition, pp. 146, 150.
[4] Monism as Connecting Science and Religion, trans. by Gilchrist, p. 42; The Riddle of the Universe, trans. by McCabe, p. 88; The Wonders of Life, trans. by McCabe, p. 18.
[5] Monism, p. 47.
[6] Ibid., p. 113.

vital functions, and just as amenable to the law of substance."[1]

A second characteristic conclusion of materialism is the groundlessness of the notion of freedom. Following the obvious demands of the theory of the mechanical determination of all events in the universe, it scouts the notion of any possible option as to human conduct. "Man," says Moleschott, "is the sum of parents and nurse, of place and time, of pleasure and weather, of sound and light, of food and clothing. His will is the necessary result of all these causes, bound to a law of nature, like the planet to its course, like the plant to the soil."[2] In very similar terms Büchner defines man as a product of "outward and inward workings," a being that is subject to the same law which rules plant and beast.[3] For Haeckel the doctrine of freedom ranks as an obsolete fiction. "The freedom of the will," he says, "is not an object for critical scientific inquiry at all, for it is a pure dogma, based on an illusion, and has no real existence."[4]

A third main conclusion of recent materialism is the necessary repudiation of the doctrine of man's immortality. The indispensableness of the physical organism to mental activities involves, it claims, the certainty that the dissolution of the body results in the total cessation of personal existence. "Physiology pronounces," says Vogt, "definitely and categorically against an individual immortality."[5] Büchner approves this statement of Vogt, and says, "Not conviction but mere selfish caprice, not science but mere faith, can support the idea of continued personal existence."[6] Haeckel contends that the

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[1] The Riddle of the Universe, p. 204; compare Wonders of Life, p. 23.
[2] Der Kreislauf des Lebens, p. 436.
[3] Kraft und Stoff, p. 260.
[4] The Riddle of the Universe, p. 15.
[5] Physiologische Briefe, p. 634.
[6] Kraft und Stoff, p. 210.

advance of science in the last sixty years has rendered the notion of personal immortality inexcusable.[1] That notion, he says, marks "the highest point of superstition," and is in "hopeless contradiction with the most solid empirical truths of modern science."[2]

The fourth conclusion of recent materialism gives expression to its antitheistic position. With the same confidence with which it vetoes man's freedom and immortality it puts under ban the thought of a personal God. There is no occasion, it assumes, to postulate an almighty designer of the universe, since the universe reveals no design. All changes take place with unfailing necessity under the control of the eternal laws immanent in the eternal matter. A personal agent in connection with the world-process would be a superfluity and an impertinence. To identify the fixed laws of nature, says Büchner, with the workings of an eternal reason will not answer. "Either the laws of nature rule, or the eternal reason rules; the two must come into conflict every instant"[3]—a statement which certainly is very disparaging either to reason or to nature, and leads one to inquire what Büchner could have meant by speaking as though man might properly felicitate himself on being a child of nature.[4] In the view of Haeckel the conception of a personal God is so clearly untenable that it is scarcely a matter for discussion. Speaking of monistic science as interpreted by himself, he says: "It marks the highest intellectual progress, in that it definitely rules out the three central dogmas of metaphysics—God, freedom, and immortality."[5] Again he remarks: "Our clear modern insight into the regularity and causative character of

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[1] Monism, pp. 54, 55.
[2] The Riddle of the Universe, pp. 188, 210.
[3] Kraft und Stoff, p. 42.
[4] Ibid., eighth edition, Preface.
[5] The Riddle of the Universe, p. 232.

natural processes, and especially our knowledge of the universal reign of the law of substance are inconsistent with a belief in a personal God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will."[1]

From these four main conclusions of materialism various inferences obviously follow, such as the complete nullity of all supposed miracles and revelations, and the vanity of the notion that man is in any sense the end to which the terrestrial system is directed. The last of these inferences is strongly emphasized by Haeckel. Indeed, his despite toward the anthropocentric conception of the world is of a piece with his antipathy against the notions of God, freedom, and immortality. "The ridiculous imperial folly of Caligula," he says, "is but a special form of man's arrogant assumption of divinity."[2]

A very striking feature of the German school of materialists is the satisfaction which they seem to take in their negation of God and of man as he is represented in Christian thought. Here they stand in broad contrast with the English scholars to whom reference has been made. When Romanes felt obliged to admit that the evidences for theism had been rendered inconclusive to his mind he confessed that for him the universe had lost its "soul of loveliness," and spoke of "the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of the creed" which once was his and "the lonely mystery of existence" to which he had been consigned by its departure. Words of similar import are on record from Clifford. On the other hand, not one of the writers with whom we have been dealing in this connection, so far as we have been able to discover, ever expressed a regret for the necessity of believing in an aimless, godless world, in the blotting out

[1] Wonders of Life, p. 67.
[2] The Riddle of the Universe, p. 14; compare Monism, pp. 13–15.

of the individual souls of men, and in the prospective extinction of humanity as a race. The complacency with which they have held their barren and dismal creed and their eagerness to bear down a competing faith suggest that they must have gravitated unconsciously into a condition of scientific, or rather unscientific, fanaticism.

V.—Shortcomings of the Materialistic Theory

A very poor opinion of the merits of materialism is derived from a review of its constituency. The list of its outspoken advocates among recent scholars who have any considerable reputation is by no means formidable. Even those who have affiliated more or less closely with materialistic theories have quite generally preferred not to dress up their thoughts in the plain garb of materialism, and have sought for them a more seemly costume in the wardrobes of monism and agnosticism. Their quest for an improved terminology may be taken as a sign of an underlying consciousness that, philosophically, materialism takes a low rank. And there is good reason for this order of consciousness. Notwithstanding the wide circulation of the popular works of Büchner and Haeckel, the general verdict of contemporary philosophy in Germany, as well as elsewhere, is decidedly hostile to the materialistic platform. As is stated in a recent history of philosophy, "the Neo-Kantian movement in all its forms, with its earnest work upon the problem of knowledge, has had the result of rendering the superficial metaphysics of materialism evidently inadequate and impossible."[1] That this is a true description of the trend of philosophical conviction is indicated by the words of Haeckel. In bitterness of spirit over the undeniable facts

[1] Windelbland, History of Philosophy, Eng. trans., p. 643; compare Siebert, Geschichte der neueren deutschen Philosophie seit Hegel, p. 477.

he remarks: "Most of the representatives of philosophy at the universities are narrow metaphysicians and idealists, who think more of the fiction of the 'intelligible world' than of the truth of the world of sense."[1] Not less significantly he confesses that he stands with a minority even of physiologists on a question of capital importance. "Most physiologists," he says, "share the view of Dubois-Reymond, that consciousness is not a natural phenomenon, but a hyperphysical problem." This point of view, he adds, is naturally very agreeable to the prevalent metaphysics.[2] In view of such a pronounced disparity between the advocates of materialistic and of anti-materialistic philosophy one might almost suspect that the vociferous champions of the former are shouting for the purpose of keeping up their courage. Even the casual reader of the materialistic treatises cannot fail to discover reasons why they receive so little notice from men of eminence in philosophical circles. They abound in dogmatic assertions, but scarcely touch the deeper problems of metaphysical inquiry. You will find in them, for instance, the assumption of the infinitude of the world, but when you ask for the proof not so much as a first installment is discoverable. You will encounter the most positive affirmation of the objective reality of space and time, but you will look in vain for any serious attempt to justify the affirmation. You will meet the unqualified declaration that science cannot admit the notion of a personal God, but when you inquire for the grounds of so confident an assertion you find nothing better than the supposed demands of a disputable definition of substance, or the flimsy assumption that a personal will is incompatible with a system of laws; and if the more serious consideration of the incongruities in the

[1] Wonders of Life, p. 71.

[2] Ibid., pp. 289, 290.

world system is brought forward, the right to use it is seen to be voided by the endeavor, which appears in one connection or another, to present the world as an object of trust and reverence. In short, while Professor Adickes may not have been over observant of the demands of polite discourse when he said of Büchner and Haeckel, "als Philosophen sind beide Nullen,"[1] he can hardly be accused of sinful exaggeration.

An easy-going assumption, which is specially characteristic of Haeckel, appears in emphatic declarations that recent science, especially in the line of microscopic investigation, has profoundly modified the basis of psychological theory, so that the spiritualistic conception has no longer a standing-ground against the materialistic. What now are the facts? What discoveries have been made which require a radical transformation of psychological theory? A more minute knowledge may have been gained of the outward manifestations of the body in its embryological beginnings. A clearer understanding of brain structure and a more detailed acquaintance with the capacities of movement in the brain substance may have been attained. But what is there in all this of revolutionary import? Was it unknown prior to the last two generations that man's bodily life began at an infinitesimal point? Was the truth utterly hidden sixty years ago that in his present embodied state man's mental life is intimately connected with the body, and especially with the brain? What, then, has the microscope done in the hands of modern scientists? It has simply furnished the ground for the specification of certain details within the lines of long-admitted facts. Microscopic inspection, whether of the embryo or of the brain, never discovers the psychical, and never can. The only sphere in which

[1] Kant contra Haeckel, p. 2.

the psychical comes to true revelation is the sphere of consciousness. Sense-perception, however aided by mechanical appliances, can never apprehend aught besides masses and movements, to which mental significance can be given only by reference to experiences of the conscious thinking subject. Progress in physiological investigation is doubtless something to be thankful for; but it is simply a bad case of illusion which is presented when one supposes that the data of recent physiological research can be used to settle the fundamental questions of psychology.

Coming now to a closer consideration of the shortcomings of materialism, we notice in the first place that it commits a palpable fault in judging the near and the known by the remote and relatively unknown. First-hand knowledge is confined to the content of consciousness, to the mind in its concrete states or modifications. Everything beyond this range is reached only by inference. The inference to the material environment may be very direct and spontaneous, but it is conditioned, nevertheless, upon antecedents in the conscious subject, who knows his own modifications first of all, and accounts for some of them by reference to an outside reality. Now, what sort of a procedure is it to bring in this relatively remote and inferred outside reality to the virtual or formal negation of the conscious subject? The incongruity into which materialistic theory runs at this point is glaring and unmistakable. "Let it be assumed," says Professor Ladd, "that the phenomena of consciousness have no real subject in the mind. Such phenomena must, accordingly, be attributed to the peculiarly constituted and mutually interacting molecules of the brain. But these supreme physical beings are themselves, so far as they are the object of knowledge, preëminently mental creations;

and the sole warrant for carrying them over into the realm of extramental reality consists in certain irresistible convictions or assumptions of mind. To make their real being the account of the mental phenomena, and thus to deny the real being of the subject of mental phenomena, is not only to explain what is most direct and certain by what is most indirect and uncertain; it even involves the wonderful paradox that the one being in whose active energizing all conceptions of all real being arise feels justified in denying its own reality in the supposed favor of certain of its most remote and doubtful conceptions."[1] As Huxley remarked, the attempt of the materialist to bite this file is quite certain to be repaid with broken teeth.

In the second place, materialistic theory fails decidedly to give any satisfactory explanation of the unity and continuity of the mental life. That life in its oneness and persistence requires a unitary subject. Such a subject is not supplied by the material organism, as being an aggregate of separable and inconstant parts. One may, indeed, imagine the parts to act together to produce a general effect, but this effect could not be regarded as anything else than a sum, not a real unity, save as it is seen to be the state or modification of a unitary being. And then, too, how is the effect in question to be united with antecedent effects, and all be recognized as experiences of the same subject? Surely a mere aggregate of molecules, which are in perpetual flux, ought not to be thought of as working such a miracle. Even if we suppose the incoming molecules to be in like position with their antecedents, and to be subject to similar vibrations, we have done next to nothing toward explaining the continued identity of the conscious subject. Mere similarity does not consti-

[1] Physiological Psychology, p. 677.

tute identity, any more than the agreement of two minds in their thoughts makes them the same mind. The unitary persistent subject alone is adequate to explain the facts of unity of consciousness and continuous personal identity. That the assumption of such a subject does not provide full insight into the problem of unity and identity may be granted. It is, however, an immense advantage to have a subject which by supposition is not an aggregate of separable and fugitive parts, as opposed to a subject which is understood to be of that order.

Again, materialistic theory sins against the law of causality in deriving the higher from the lower. It requires us to suppose that the unfeeling generates the emotional, the unconscious the conscious, the nonintelligent the intelligent, and that something which is without recognition of itself either as past or present gives origin to memory. Materialists pride themselves on their strict deference to the principle of causality; but how is that principle respected in a scheme which thus makes results to transcend so immeasurably their assumed causes? A spiritual power being supposed, to which emotion, consciousness, intelligence, and memory belong as native capacities, it is quite conceivable that in the specific exercise of these capacities this power should be influenced by adjacent matter. But to attribute to matter the origination of the spiritual power itself, with all its qualitative superiority, involves a distinct violation of the principle of sufficient cause, unless the term "matter" is arbitrarily made to cover what belongs under the category of mind or spirit.[1]

Furthermore, materialistic theory is chargeable with being entangled in this dilemma: either it must collide with the law of the conservation of energy, or it must

[1] Compare Flint, Anti-Theistic Theories, pp. 140–145.

pronounce the entire mental content a counterfeit of reality, a perfectly empty and powerless phenomenon. If the mental content is simply the product of physical energy, or of matter in motion, then in the act of production a portion of the latter must pass over to the former, and so take on a form which is incapable of being described in physical terms and cannot consistently be supposed to fulfill physical functions. The physical energy in question must thus be regarded as having escaped from its proper circle or as lost. If this breach of the law of the conservation of energy is not accepted, then the other alternative must be taken, and the conclusion drawn that physical energy in producing the mental has produced nothing real, the mental being as empty as the shadow which accompanies the moving train, and having as little function in determining aught in the world. But what less is this than the turning of human experience in its entirety into mockery and illusion? If feelings, ideas, hopes, aspirations, and purposes are not veritable powers in the world, then men are under the hopeless dominion of the purely phantasmal.

Once more, materialism involves sheer fatalism with all its baneful consequences. It assumes that everything in the mental range is in the clutches of the same inexorable laws which rule the physical realm. No man has any more power to determine his own conduct than has the piece of wood cast upon the sea to select its own course. The morally evil has the same right in the world as the morally good, having come in by the same compulsion of absolute necessity. The rankest pessimism has at least an equal claim with optimism, for there is, according to the materialistic scheme, no wise or benevolent will back of things to guarantee a worthy outcome; and who can tell what blind necessity will effect in the

course of the ages? For a stanch materialist to be without hope, as well as without God in the world, must be regarded as perfectly in order.

As has been noticed, outspoken materialism distinctly renounces the hope of immortality. In doing this it places much emphasis on the assumption that modern biology has outlawed faith in a future conscious existence of the individual. The assumption is baseless. Modern biology has not appreciably changed the conditions of faith in immortality. If, on the one hand, it has enlarged the circle of detailed observation of the dependence of psychical experience on the physical organism, on the other hand it has enlarged the scope of observed dependence of physical processes on psychical activity. The balance has not turned against the psychical factor. And since all the objections to construing this factor as a mere function of a material organism remain in full force, Christian faith is as free as ever it was to found on the existence of a personal God, conceived as universal Father, an assurance of immortality. Where this great theistic postulate is firmly grasped that assurance has also a firm tenure. As has been well remarked, "The hope of immortality for the individual is a hope in God as perfect Ethical Spirit, regnant over all life in every stage and form of its manifestation."[1]

The above exposition has indicated that materialism is quite apt to take refuge under the name of "monism." It is not to be supposed, however, that monism is necessarily in affiliation with materialism. A spiritualistic monism, or a doctrine which makes spirit the one substance, is quite as possible as a materialistic or agnostic monism. In our view the only tolerable monism is that which makes infinite Spirit the ultimate reality, and regards

[1] G. T. Ladd, Philosophy of Religion, II. 537.

matter and finite spirits as diverse forms or products of his energizing, having in him their constant source, and also in him their uniting bond. Materialistic monism is rationally excluded, and an agnostic monism is likely to suffer mortal pangs in its attempt to avoid a virtual affirmation of either materialism or spiritualism.

CHAPTER III

POSITIVISM

I.—The Positivism of Comte

The era of positivism, so far as it may be considered to have been marked by the literary activity of Comte, fell between the years 1824 and 1857. As might be inferred from these limits, positivism received an incentive from the absorbing interest which began to be taken in the natural sciences in the second quarter of the last century. But perhaps a more potent cause of its origin may be found in the social ideals which were inherited from the French Revolution. As a result of that great crisis there was begotten in not a few minds an enthusiastic confidence in the possibility of making over society according to new and improved patterns. Comte shared largely in this confidence. His early association with Saint Simon was indicative of his bent; and, though he came to speak disparagingly of the scheme of this socialistic leader, he ever regarded the working out of a social ideal as the supreme end to be achieved.

In the view of Comte the great excellence of positivism consists in its being the one system which observes normal philosophical method. It builds, not upon unfounded assumptions, but upon observed facts. Eschewing all metaphysical speculations, and recognizing the insuperable limits of human knowledge, it confines itself to the study of phenomena and to such inductions as this study may warrant. Its domain is the relative. As John Stuart Mill observes, "We have, according to Comte, no knowledge of anything but phenomena, and

our knowledge of phenomena is relative, not absolute. We know not the essence nor the real mode of production of any fact, but only its relation to other facts in the way of succession or of similitude. These relations are constant, that is, always the same in the same circumstances. The constant resemblances which link phenomena together, and the constant sequences which unite them as antecedent and consequent, are termed their laws. The laws of phenomena are all we know respecting them. Their essential nature and their ultimate causes, either efficient or final, are unknown and inscrutable to us."[1] In dealing with the laws of phenomena the positive philosophy endeavors to reduce them to the least possible number.[2]

Cognition of phenomena takes place, Comte contends, through the instrumentality of the senses. There is no such thing as a first-hand knowledge of psychical facts, at least of those in the intellectual order as distinguished from the emotional or moral order. Discovery by introspection is out of the question. We can study, to some extent, the physiological basis of our mental operations, and we can find grounds of inference in the tokens of mental operations which are on exhibition in the history of the race; but we have no means of directly observing our mental content or activities. Psychology, so far as based on an assumed capability of introspection, is pure illusion.[3] On the other hand, phrenology has genuine claims to consideration, and Gall, though his scheme needs revision, is to be regarded as a precursor of positivism.[4] In this stress upon sense perceptions as the channel of authentic information Comte seems to come

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[1] The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, pp. 7, 8
[2] Comte, Cours de Philosophie Positive, I. 12.
[3] Ibid., I. 28–30.
[4] Catechism of the Positive Religion, Eng. trans., pp. 252–254.

very close to the platform of the sensational psychology. Still he does not commit himself distinctly to that platform, as may be concluded from his reference to the supplementary phrase, "except the mind itself," which Leibnitz added to the maxim, "There is nothing in the understanding which was not previously in the senses."[1] As for the claims of materialism, Comte was not inclined to concede to them any formal recognition.[2] On the whole, his system in relation to psychological theory may be described as a kind of halting sensationalism and a naïve empiricism which accepted the testimony of the senses at full worth without making any serious effort to scrutinize the grounds of that acceptance.

In commending his theory of philosophical method Comte appealed in particular to an historical attestation, namely, to the fact that men's conceptions, or ways of thinking about things, pass through three great stages, of which the last is the *positive*. "The human spirit," he says, "by its nature, employs successively in each of its researches three methods of philosophizing essentially different in character and radically opposed: first the theological method, then the metaphysical method, and finally the positive method. Consequently we have three kinds of philosophy or general systems of conceptions respecting the totality of phenomena, systems which are mutually exclusive: the first is the necessary point of departure of the human intelligence; the third is its fixed and definite state; the second is solely destined to serve as a means of transition. In the theological stage the human spirit, essentially directing its researches toward the interior nature of beings, the first and final cause of all effects by which it is impressed—in a word, toward

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[1] System of Positive Polity, Eng. trans., III. 15.
[2] Ibid., I. 39–41; Catechism, p. 161.

the field of absolute knowledge—represents phenomena as produced by the direct and continuous action of supernatural agents, more or less numerous, whose arbitrary intervention explains all the anomalous appearances of the universe. In the metaphysical stage, which is at bottom only a general modification of the first, the supernatural agents are replaced by abstract forces, true entities (abstractions personified) inherent in the different beings of the world, and conceived as capable of engendering by themselves all the observed phenomena, the explanation of which consists, then, in assigning to each the corresponding entity. Finally, in the positive stage, the human spirit, recognizing the impossibility of obtaining absolute notions, renounces the search for the origin and destination of the universe and for the knowledge of the interior causes of phenomena, in order to attach itself solely to the discovery, by a suitable combination of reasoning and observation, of their effective laws, that is to say, their invariable relations of succession and similitude."[1] That the three stages are repeated in the progress of the individual from childhood to manhood was regarded by Comte as confirming the conclusion that the positive is the ultimate stage, the only one tolerable to mature thinking.[2] Among the several stages the metaphysical was evidently least esteemed by the positivist philosopher. Metaphysics, he said, is nothing but simply a solvent of theology. "It has no other effect, in the original evolution, whether of the individual or of society, but to facilitate the gradual passage from theology to positivism."[3]

In the intention of Comte, as was noticed, the positive philosophy was directed toward a great social ideal. He considered that society was suffering grievously from

[1] Cours de Philosophie Positive, I. 2–4. [2] Ibid., I. 6.
[3] Catechism, pp. 169, 170.

anarchical or excessively individualistic tendencies, that homogeneity in doctrine was the necessary antecedent to the overcoming of these tendencies, and that only by the method of the positive philosophy could this homogeneity be attained. How pronounced was his conviction upon this subject may be judged from the following sentences: "A doctrine of universal validity—such is the sole remedy, if the reason of the West is to be freed from its present contradictory position, in which destruction of the whole becomes more and more irreconcilable with construction in detail."[1] "The object of our philosophy is to direct the spiritual reorganization of the civilized world."[2] "We must call in an authority superior to all individual judgment, to be able to prescribe, even in unimportant points, rules which shall have any real efficacy. Such rules will then rest on a view of the needs of society which shall admit of no hesitation as to obedience."[3] "One of the leading features of our modern anarchy is the general tendency to a dispersive, special action. It is a lamentable waste of strength. Such special action is as absurd as it is immoral."[4] "In the sphere of theory there must be no specialty."[5] Evidently by Comte the individual was rated at a very small figure as compared with society, and his view of the ideal constitution of society left as little place for doctrinal variety as did the scheme of the stanchest Ultramontanist. His respect, therefore, for such an advocate of theocratic sovereignty as De Maistre was not a token of inconsistency. He designed for the reconstituted society to which he looked forward a full equivalent for the government of the pope and the hierarchy.[6]

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[1] System of Positive Polity, IV. 321. [2] Ibid., I. 35.
[3] Catechism, p. 50. [4] Ibid., p. 112. [5] Ibid., p. 113.
[6] Compare Levy-Bruhl, The Philosophy of Auguste Comte, Eng. trans., pp. 297, 298.

The superiority assigned by Comte to the social interest is reflected in his classification of the sciences. Arranged according to the degree of generality and simplicity they run as follows: mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology, social physics or sociology. The last-named is the crown of the series to which all the others are tributary. In a later enumeration Comte gave a distinct place to ethics.

The interest in sociology also dominated the religious scheme of the positivist philosopher. In the earlier part of his career religion stood in the background. During his latest years it was treated as of foremost concern. This change in attitude was not unrecognized by Comte himself. In the grandiloquent style to which he was very much inclined he represented himself as fulfilling in the earlier stage the role of Aristotle and in the later that of Saint Paul; the one being reflected in the Course of Positive Philosophy, and the other in the System of Positive Polity, as also in the Catechism of the Positive Religion. "In the first," he says, "I have carefully kept the objective method in the ascendant; as was necessary when the course of thought was always proceeding from the world in the direction of man. But the fulfillment of this preliminary task, by the fact of placing me at the universal point of view, involves henceforth the prevalence of the subjective method as the only source of complete systematization, the procedure now being from man outward toward the world. Thus the higher logic under which man's primitive belief arose adapts itself, when regenerated by positivism, to his final constructions. Its ultimate position is indicated in the principle of the ascendency of the heart over the intellect."[1] This language seems to assume that the heart which has been well

[1] System of Positive Polity, Preface, p. xii.

schooled in positivist doctrines can be trusted to impel in the right direction. Certainly this assumption is needed to secure Comte from the charge of self-contradiction. Such a charge has been more than once preferred against him. It was urged at an early date by Littré. Though an ardent disciple, he found it impossible to follow his master, believing that his later teaching, in method, spirit, and content, was irreconcilable with the earlier. "All that which Comte produced," he says, "after 1845 is under the dominion of the subjective method and often of mysticism."[1] Doubtless Comte considered himself entirely faithful to the fundamental postulates with which he set out. It is also to be admitted that these postulates were repeated to the end. Still it is true that his teaching, after he began to pose as the fabricator of a religion, took on so largely a changed aspect as to seem like a new system. There was a substantial ground for the division which occurred among French Positivists by the refusal of one wing to follow the founder in his second rôle.

As the positive philosophy contemplates human society as the supreme subject of investigation, so the positive religion, as formulated by Comte, knows of no higher object of worship than collective humanity. The fact of the existence of a transcendent Deity is either ignored or discredited by him. In one connection he gives place to the shallow assumption, which occurs in the writings of the German materialists, that the admission of a supernatural or infinite will is incompatible with the idea of a stable system of laws.[2] Again, he remarks, that the consensus of positive philosophy essentially excludes the hypothesis of a higher Providence.[3] On the

[1] Auguste Comte et la Philosophie Positive, p. 589.
[2] Catechism, p. 218. [3] System of Positive Polity, I. 51, 52.

other hand, he repudiates all connection with formal atheism and pronounces it foreign to his teaching. "Atheism," he says, "even from the intellectual point of view, is a very imperfect form of emancipation; for its tendency is to prolong the metaphysical stage indefinitely by continuing to seek for new solutions of theological problems instead of setting aside all inaccessible researches on the ground of their utter inutility."[1] Practically he rules out the thought of a personal God, but a sense of the dogmatism inherent in atheism makes him hesitate to assert definitely the atheistic negation.

In setting up humanity as the object of worship the founder of the positive religion recognized that his divinity needed some pruning and decorating. Only the meritorious are given a place in the Great Being, that is, in the collective humanity which is the proper object of public worship. Among the objects of private worship woman holds a preferred position. She is the best representative of the Great Being. She embodies the moral providence of the race. She stands to man as his guardian angel and household divinity. The nearest objects of worship for the man are the mother, the wife, and the daughter, while the woman does well to worship the mother, the husband, and the son. In religious art the woman holding a child in her arms is the proper symbol.

A singular feature in the positive religion is the sympathy manifested for fetichism. Comte is very emphatic in acknowledging the close association between it and his own system. "Each in its manner," he says, "consecrates the universal supremacy of feeling; and they are only distinguished morally in that positivism substitutes the adoration of products for that of materials."[2] Even this

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[1] System of Positive Polity, I. 36.
[2] System of Positive Polity, II. 118; Catechism, p. 365.

much of distinction seems not to have been held very tenaciously. In a late writing Comte felt at liberty to speak of natural objects, such as the sun, the planets, and space, as holding a sympathetic relation to the human race, and actually styled the earth the *Grand Fétiche*.[1]

In securing the practical supremacy of the positive religion Comte placed great dependence upon a priesthood the members of which are to be subjected to a most thorough training, and first at the age of forty-two are to attain full recognition as priests. This body is not to interfere directly with political affairs, but will nevertheless exercise a potent influence upon the management of the state by giving moral and intellectual guidance to the rulers. Its general point of view will fit it to fulfill a prominent function in relation to the division of labor.[2] On account of its encyclopedic training it will be qualified to resume the medical office, and indeed will treat that office "as the inseparable complement of its principal function."[3] Its power extends to the passing of such sentence upon the unworthy as shall exclude them from the benefits of human society.[4] Within the priesthood "the supreme power is vested in the high priest of humanity, whose natural residence will be Paris as the metropolis of the regenerated West. He is the sole governor of the positive clergy. He ordains its members, he changes their residence, he revokes their commission, all on his own responsibility. The high priest of humanity will be, more truly than any mediæval pope, the only real head of the Western world."[5]

The priesthood was regarded by Comte as the fit instru-

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[1] Littré, Auguste Comte et la Philosophie Positive, pp. 573–577; Mill, The Positive Philosophy of Comte, pp. 174, 175.
[2] System of Positive Polity, IV. 634. [3] Ibid., IV. 66.
[4] Catechism, p. 296. [5] Ibid., pp. 303, 359.

ment for bringing about that intellectual homogeneity or uniformity of doctrine upon which, as has been observed, he laid immense emphasis. In achieving this end the priestly body was not expected to make use of forcible repression. At the same time it was not put under obligation to respect any radical maxim on liberty of examination and of speech. Indeed, Comte expressly taught that, while freedom of discussion was needed to secure the triumph of positive principles, it is properly made subject to limitations when those principles have come into the ascendant. "Systematic tolerance," he declares, "cannot exist, and never has existed, except in relation to opinions regarded as indifferent or as doubtful."[1] In short, Comte's scheme openly and explicitly contemplated the control of the race through the instrumentality of a priesthood. It was in particular this aspect of positivism which led John Stuart Mill to speak of it as "the completest system of spiritual and temporal despotism which ever yet emanated from a human brain, unless possibly that of Ignatius Loyola."[2]

Remark has often been made on the colossal vanity of Comte; and certainly it is scarcely conceivable that his own estimate of his system should ever be seconded in a sane understanding. The positive philosophy is remote enough from the perfection and ultimateness which were ascribed to it in his thought. In the first place, it is chargeable with superficiality in its views of the office of philosophy and in its scrutiny of philosophical problems. Making philosophy to consist in a sum of general conclusions drawn from the subject-matter of the various sciences, it slights its distinctive vocation to examine the

[1] Cours de Philosophie Positive, IV. 39–47.
[2] Autobiography. pp. 212, 213.

notions on which the sciences repose.[1] While repudiating metaphysics, it admits the conception of "property" (or quality), which has an obvious metaphysical implication. It makes free use of the terms "phenomena" and "law" without stopping to define them. Phenomena are treated by it as though they were given outright; whereas it is impossible rationally to interpret them without taking account of the constructive action of the perceiving mind, or the fact that the mind has part in making the phenomena to be what they are. It denies the possibility of any direct self-knowledge or introspective study, and thus blocks the way to an explanation of our cognition of psychical facts. According to Comte, "our knowledge of the human mind must be obtained by observing other people. How we are to observe other people's mental operations, or how interpret the signs of them without having learned what the signs mean by knowledge of ourselves, he does not state."[2] That he should so limit the office of psychology, and exalt, as he did, the function of phrenology, must be regarded as a very poor testimonial to philosophical competency.

In the second place, the positivism of Comte is open to criticism as resting upon an arbitrary historical induction. Doubtless there is an element of truth in the doctrine of the three stages. The childish mind, as also the mind of the maturer individual who from lack of training is but little above the plane of childish conceptions, is much inclined to an indiscriminate anthropomorphism. Out of the vivid consciousness of its own agency it derives an impulse to refer events in the world to agents like itself in feeling and volition. With the progress of intelligence and experience the generalizing faculty

[1] Compare Fouillée, Le Mouvement Positiviste, pp. 14, 15.
[2] Mill, The Positive Philosophy of Comte, p. 59.

comes into play, and an enlarged reference is made to laws, principles, and cosmic powers as compared with manlike agents. But a development like this, resulting in an amendment of the cruder and more spontaneous anthropomorphism, is very different from Comte's representation of three successive and mutually exclusive stages. Taken in the broad sense in which the representation is made by him, it is contradictory to the facts. The theological is by no means a past and forsaken standpoint. According to Comte, theistic conceptions are of the theological type; but theism never had before such an august intellectual constituency as it has today. As for metaphysics, the teaching of the universities in every country at all distinguished for mental life is clear evidence that it has not abandoned the field. So far is the positive method, as defined by Comte, from being regnant that the study of origins, which that method excludes as impertinent, never commanded greater interest than it has during the last half century.[1] Judged by the actual evolution up to date the positive method has failed to establish its claim to finality. It has not been installed as the exclusive method, and even if it had been that fact would fall short of a demonstration that it is to be reckoned the final method. One might look forward to a process of reconciliation and claim, as does Fouillée,[2] that the ideal is to be realized in a synthesis of the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. In building upon the doctrine of the three stages Comte was resorting to a very shaky foundation for a philosophy.

In the third place positivism, as formulated by Comte, is chargeable with an artificial and fantastic scheme of

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[1] Compare Belot, L'Idée et la Méthode de la Philosophie Scientifique chez Auguste Comte, Bibliothèque du Congrès Internationale de Philosophie, IV. 460. 461. [2] Le Mouvement Positive, p. 268.

religion. That which it sets forth as the supreme object of worship is confessedly neither supreme nor actual. It is not supreme, for humanity appears only as a transient product in a perishing world. It is not actual for, according to Comte's denial of personal immortality, the dead are extinct, while the future generations do not yet exist. Since the living make but a small fraction of the great whole, the object of worship is for the major part a mental fiction. And even if the object were thoroughly real it is not such as could satisfy the deeper religious sentiments. These find no adequate object in a merely relative greatness and goodness. They demand the absolute. As Edward Caird has remarked, "A 'relative' religion is not a religion at all; it is at best a morality trying to gather to itself some of the emotions which were formerly connected with religious belief."[1] Without doubt the discourse of Comte on religion contains very excellent maxims. But these are only commonplaces of Christianity. Taken as a whole his religion is a paltry substitute for the Christian faith, and it is no wonder that its existence has been mostly on paper.

Once more, the positive philosophy of Comte labors under a serious burden of self-contradiction. As was noticed, he justifies his transition from the objective to the subjective method on the ground that his preceding investigations had placed him at the universal point of view, whereas the possibility of attaining anything more than a relative and fragmentary outlook upon reality is a fundamental postulate of his system. He repudiates metaphysics as being occupied with unreal abstractions and universals, and yet centers thought and worship upon a humanity which, as defined by him, is mostly outside the plane of the actual; a mixture of the abstract

[1] The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte, p. 139.

and the concrete; a strange sort of universal. He repudiates theology as belonging to a vanquished stage of human development, and yet in the end justifies the fetichism which he had characterized as representing the primary form of theological conceptions; at least he justifies a fetichistic devotion, and if it be supposed, as his original philosophy required, that there is no object corresponding to the devotion, then it must be said that he justifies the paying of religious respect to fictions which are known to be fictions. The incongruities are marked, and provoke well-nigh a feeling of compassion for the man who could believe that he was publishing the program of the final philosophy and religion.

II.—Representatives of Positivism in Germany and England

A biographer of Feuerbach has said of him, "He overthrew the system of Hegel, and founded positivism in analyzing the essence of Christianity and the essence of religion."[1] The last half of this statement may be accepted as containing a measure of truth. While the teaching of Feuerbach was not precisely parallel to that of the contemporary French positivist, it contained points of obvious resemblance. In the former as well as in the latter the senses were emphasized as the channels of all knowledge. In both alike the human species was regarded as the great reality. In both also humanity was set forth as the object of religious worship. On the last point, however, a difference may be noticed. The fundamental thesis in the religious philosophy of Comte was that humanity should consciously be accepted as the object of religious veneration in place of the transcendent Deity. The central proposition of Feuerbach was

[1] Albert Levy, La Philosophie de Feuerbach, Intro., p. xxii.

that humanity is actually the object of religious veneration, since men are only objectifying their own nature and needs when they present their prayers and ascriptions to the God who is over all. "Man," he says, "projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object of this projected image of himself converted into a subject."[1] Even the least anthropomorphic conception of God stands within the objectifying process. "The God free from anthropomorphisms, impartial, passionless, is nothing else than the nature of the understanding itself regarded as objective."[2] "God as a morally perfect being is nothing else than the realized idea, the fulfilled law of morality, the moral nature of man posited as the absolute being."[3] Belief in Providence is simply belief in the divine reality and significance of man's own being.[4] "In prayer man turns to the omnipotence of goodness, which simply means that in prayer man adores his own heart, regards his own feelings as absolute."[5] "The beginning, middle, and end of religion is man."[6] "Religion is a dream, in which our own conceptions and emotions appear to us as separate existences, beings out of ourselves."[7]

Had Feuerbach deliberately set to work to write a satire upon religion it is difficult to imagine that he could have found any terms better suited to his purpose than those which he has actually employed. In religion, as he makes out, man walks from beginning to end as the helpless victim of illusion. He thinks that he is cultivating practical relations with God, while all the time he is paying respect to himself. The only mitigation of this idolatry which Feuerbach suggests lies in an arbitrary

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[1] The Essence of Christianity (1841), pp. 52, 53. [2] Ibid., p. 58.
[3] Ibid., p. 73. [4] Ibid., p. 144. [5] Ibid., p. 169. [6] Ibid., p. 239.
[7] Ibid., p. 264.

ascription of divinity and infinitude to man. "Consciousness," he says, "is essentially infinite in its nature. In the consciousness of the infinite the conscious subject has for his object the infinity of his own nature."[1] In line with this high-sounding description is his designation of man as the true *ens realissimum*.[2] Dowered with such attributes man might be regarded as somewhat excusable for making a god of himself, only it is to be noticed that this "most real being," who has in the fact of consciousness a certificate of infinitude, is destined, in accordance with Feuerbach's denial of immortality, speedily to lose consciousness and to pass into the estate of a practical nullity.

The discourse of Feuerbach is so purely oracular, so little characterized by sober argumentation, that to pay it the tribute of serious criticism would be an ill-placed gratuity. It is enough to observe that his conception of religion conducts logically to the wrecking of all intellectual confidence. If in his deepest and most inveterate impulsions man is but the victim of illusion, there is no testimony of his nature which affords any reliable ground of inference.

One is hardly authorized to speak of a positivist school in Germany; but a number of writers in the latter part of the century shared in the views of Feuerbach. The German materialists, as has been observed, were much inclined to exalt him into an oracle on matters religious and theological. An admiring biographer gives a considerable list of his followers,[3] but many of those mentioned cannot be regarded as disciples in any strict sense.

In England John Stuart Mill was an appreciative student of positivism. For a period he maintained a friendly

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[1] The Essence of Christianity, p. 21. [2] Ibid., p. 6.
[3] Bolin, Ludwig Feuerbach, seine Werken und seine Zeitgenossen.

interchange of views with Comte. He was very largely in sympathy with the French positivist's conception of the proper domain of human knowledge, and also with his exaltation of the claims of sociology. On the other hand, as appears above, he sharply criticised various features in Comte's system, and considered that in the latter part of his career he strayed widely from the path of philosophical sobriety. He may be said to have figured more largely as the critic than as the disciple.

Among those approaching more nearly to the character of disciples a prominent rank has been taken by R. Congreve, J. H. Bridges, and Frederic Harrison. With some measure of propriety Marian Evans (George Eliot) may also be mentioned among the English followers of the French philosopher. Herbert Spencer wrote of her: "She has been more a disciple of Comte than of mine; although her acceptance of Comte's views was very much qualified, and indeed hardly constituted her a Comtist in the full sense of the word. Still she had strong leanings to the 'religion of humanity,' and that always remained a point of difference between us."[1]

Frederic Harrison has been especially brought to notice, as a champion of positivism, by his controversy with Herbert Spencer. In the course of this controversy he took pains to indicate that he was not committed to the entire scheme of the positivist philosopher. "I look," he said, "upon very much that Comte threw out for the future as tentative and purely Utopian."[2] In his definition of religion he so far followed Comte as to make humanity the highest object of reverence. "The final religion of enlightened man," he remarked, "is the sys-

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[1] Autobiography, II. 430.
[2] The Nature and Reality of Religion, a Controversy between Frederic Harrison and Herbert Spencer, p. 125.

tematized and scientific form of the spontaneous religion of natural man. Both rest on the same elements—belief in the power which controls his life, a grateful reverence for the power so acknowledged. The primitive man thought that power to be the object of nature affecting man. The cultured man knows that power to be humanity itself, controlling and controlled by nature according to natural law."[1] But, while thus exalting humanity, it would appear that Harrison was not minded to make it the object of any formal worship. "My friends and I," he said, "address no prayers to humanity as 'holy' or otherwise."[2] Again he observed: "I mean by religion this sense of social duty, pushed to its full extent, strengthened by a sound view of human nature, and warmed by the glow of imagination and sympathy. It has been said in a vague way that religion is 'morality touched by emotion.' The religion of humanity, as I conceive it, is simply morality fused with social devotion and enlightened by sound philosophy."[3] This contrasts favorably with the fantastic elements in the scheme of Comte. Nevertheless, there is very little hope for a religion like that which is here sketched. It differs too little from pure secularism to have any other goal than inanity and helplessness.

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[1] The Nature and Reality of Religion, p. 46. [2] Ibid., p. 124.
[3] Ibid., p. 133.

CHAPTER IV.

AGNOSTIC AND ANTITHEISTIC EVOLUTIONISM

I.—Herbert Spencer's Evolutionary Philosophy

While French positivism and German materialism were initiated apart from any distinct recognition of the modern theory of evolution, the "synthetic philosophy," as Spencer named his system, made that theory fundamental from the start. As early as 1851 he had taken note of Von Baer's statement that the development of every organism is a "change from homogeneity to heterogeneity." In the years which intervened between this date and the publication of Darwin's epoch-making treatise on The Origin of Species (1859), his thinking, if not properly Darwinian, was quite emphatically evolutionary. The change effected by contact with the teaching of the great naturalist consisted in a modification of his view as to the efficient factors in the evolutionary process. Hitherto it had been his conviction that "the sole cause of organic evolution is the inheritance of functionally produced modifications." Darwin made it plain to him that a wide sphere must be accorded to the operation of natural selection, or to the superior chance for survival in the struggle for existence which pertains to those individuals in any given group which have been gifted by nature with points of advantage.[1] It remained, however, his opinion that the inheritance of characters acquired by use has been a great factor in evolution, and he was never fully satisfied with the scope which Darwin conceded to this factor. On the whole, aside from a rein-

[1] Autobiography, II. 57.

forcement of his confidence in the legitimacy and scientific worth of the evolutionary hypothesis, he seems not to have received from Darwin a very conspicuous and effective contribution to his own system.

So far as Spencer endeavored to transcend the proper sphere of the particular sciences, and to deal with reality in general, he manifestly owed nothing to the author of The Origin of Species; for the latter was chary of philosophical speculations, and never undertook to speak the authoritative word within their domain. As to his personal faith, Darwin has indicated that at the time he wrote his great work, though somewhat troubled by the contemplation of the pain and misery incident to animal existence, he still counted himself a theist. Later his conviction appears to have been somewhat wavering as respects the warrant for inferring design in nature. In a letter written in 1879, three years before his death, he has given us this testimony: "In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, an agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind."[1]

Among philosophical antecedents English empiricism and sensationalism exerted the largest influence upon Spencer. His interest in the German systems was not very vital, and his borrowing from them took place largely through the instrumentality of an English interpretation. As Professor Ormond has remarked, "The foundation of the synthetic philosophy was achieved in a union of Hume with Kantism as it had filtered down through the medium of the school of Hamilton."[2]

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[1] Autobiography and Selected Letters, edited by Francis Darwin, p. 55. See also pp. 61, 62, 236.

[2] Foundations of Knowledge, p. 6.

In reviewing the philosophy of Spencer it will be sufficient for the purposes of this treatise to take note of its agnosticism, its formal attitude toward the theistic faith, and the bearing of its exposition of evolution upon that faith.

The proper subject-matter of religious ideas and theories, according to a fundamental assumption of Spencer, is ultimate reality, or the first cause which we are driven to postulate. This ultimate reality we are compelled to regard as absolute and infinite. The subject-matter of religion, therefore, may be described as the absolute and the infinite. Now, any attempt to construe this subject-matter is certain to miscarry, as bringing us face to face with the inconceivable and tangling us up with manifold contradictions. To explore the absolute and infinite, or even to gain a first installment of a genuine apprehension of its nature, is beyond our competency. It results obviously that religion has for its domain the unknowable, the sphere of unqualified mystery. Not merely does it impinge upon mystery, at some point, but its proper subject-matter is wholly included in the region of absolute mystery. This conclusion is expressed with sufficient explicitness in the following sentences: "Religion under all its forms is distinguished from everything else in this, that its subject-matter is that which passes the sphere of experience."[1] "The mystery which all religions recognize turns out to be a far more transcendent mystery than any of them suspect—not a relative but an absolute mystery."[2] "Religion and science are necessary correlatives. They stand respectively for those two antithetic modes of consciousness which cannot exist asunder. A known cannot be thought of apart from an unknown; nor can an unknown be

[1] First Principles, fifth edition, §4. [2] Ibid., §14.

thought of apart from a known. And by consequence neither can become more distinct without giving greater distinctness to the other. To carry further a metaphor before used, they are the positive and negative poles of thought."[1] With the foregoing statements it is appropriate to conjoin the declaration that it is permissible to represent the inconceivable object of religion in *some* form of thought, provided "we treat every notion we thus frame as merely a symbol, utterly without resemblance to that for which it stands."[2] We may add also the assertion that, in respect of the ultimate power, "we lack the faculty of framing even the dimmest conception of it."[3]

While Spencer thus denies to religion the least fragment of a valid conception of its proper subject-matter, he finds an excuse for its continued existence in a peculiar fact of consciousness. "In the very denial," he says, "of our power to learn *what* the absolute is there lies hidden the assumption *that* it is; and the making of this assumption proves that the absolute has been present to the mind, not as nothing, but as something."[4] We have thus a consciousness of the absolute, indefinite, to be sure, and incapable of formulation, but positive and insistent, the counterpart of our sense of the relative and the conditioned. The affirmation of this vague consciousness, which is not permitted to count for real knowledge, is the sole modification of agnosticism admitted by the Spencerian system in relation to the subject-matter of religion.

How much better is science conditioned than religion as respects ability to claim a basis in the knowable? Some of Spencer's statements might be taken as imply-

[1] First Principles, fifth edition, § 30.
[2] Ibid., § 31.
[3] Principles of Psychology, II. 503.
[4] First Principles, § 26.

ing that the former has very little occasion to boast against the latter. Every one of the main factors with which science has to deal is declared by him to be quite beyond the reach of intelligible definition. Space and time are wholly incomprehensible. The immediate knowledge which we seem to have of them proves, when examined, to be total ignorance."[1] "Matter in its ultimate nature is as absolutely incomprehensible as space and time. Frame what suppositions we may, we find on tracing out their implications that they leave us nothing but a choice between opposite absurdities."[2] "All efforts to understand the essential nature of motion do but bring us to alternative impossibilities of thought."[3] "While it is impossible to form any idea of force in itself, it is equally impossible to comprehend its mode of exercise."[4] Consciousness cannot be known or conceived as either infinite or finite in duration, and "the personality of which each is conscious is a thing which cannot be truly known at all."[5]

As thus dealing with symbols which have no translatable meanings, science might seem to be utterly poverty-stricken in respect to knowledge. But it is far from Spencer's intention to represent science as a mere play with the unknown. He assigns that role to religion, and gives to science the antithetic office of investigating the known and the knowable. This antithesis is expressed in one of the passages already cited, and is very distinctly set forth in the following: "Regarding science as a gradually increasing sphere, we may say that every addition to its surface does but bring it into wider contact with surrounding nescience. There must ever remain, therefore, two antithetic modes of mental action. Throughout all

[1] First Principles, § 15. [2] Ibid., § 16. [3] Ibid., § 17. [4] Ibid., § 18. [5] Ibid., §§ 19, 20.

future time, as now, the human mind may occupy itself, not only with ascertained phenomena and their relations, but also with that unascertained something which phenomena and their relations imply. Hence, if knowledge cannot monopolize consciousness—if it must always continue possible for the mind to dwell upon that which transcends knowledge—then there can never cease to be a place for something of the nature of religion."[1] The import of such language is quite unmistakable. Religion contrasts with science as the sphere of nescience with the sphere of knowledge, as the imagined with the verified. Nor is there any considerable ambiguity as to the way in which Spencer deduces this conclusion. Implicitly or explicitly he makes use of the following propositions: The manifestations of the ultimate reality do not make it known to any extent. The manifestations (or phenomena) may be known and their relations truly specified. Religion has to do solely with the ultimate reality, and therefore its sphere is the unknown and the unknowable. Science has to do with the manifestations, and therefore its sphere is the known and the knowable.

The grounds of Spencer's doctrine of the unknowable are derived in large part from the speculations of Hamilton and Mansel. Appeal is made to Hamilton's doctrine that *to think* means to *condition,* and that consequently the unconditioned, whether infinitely great or infinitely little, lies entirely beyond the sphere of thought.[2] The like doctrine is cited from Mansel, and the same skeptical believer is drawn upon for the demonstration that the absolute and infinite, as having a possible existence out of all relations, cannot consistently be regarded as a cause, or a self-conscious subject, or indeed as the bearer of any intelligible predicate.[3] To considera-

[1] First Principles, § 4. [2] Ibid., § 24. [3] Ibid., § 13.

tions of this order Spencer adds the assumption that knowledge always subsists in and through the classification of its objects, and that the ultimate reality, as being incapable of assignment to a class, is plainly unknowable. "The first cause," he says, "the infinite, the absolute, to be known at all, must be classed. To be positively thought of, it must be thought of as such or such—as of this or that kind. Can it be like in kind to anything of which we have sensible experience? Obviously not. . . . The unconditioned, therefore, as classible neither with any form of the conditioned nor with any other unconditioned, cannot be classed at all. And to admit that it cannot be known as of such or such a kind, is to admit that it is unknowable."[1]

Agnosticism of so radical a type would seem to be obliged in self-consistency to occupy a neutral attitude toward the theistic conception or the doctrine of a personal God. In rare instances Spencer has given a token of consent to this attitude. Opposing Mansel's declaration that it is our duty, in spite of metaphysical difficulties, to think of God as personal, he observed: "Duty requires us neither to affirm nor to deny personality. Our duty is to submit ourselves with all humility to the established limits of our intelligence, and not perversely to rebel against them."[2] But, notwithstanding this statement, Spencer cannot be said to have maintained an even balance between the supposition of a personal God and the contrary supposition. He grants a place to the former only at the expense of reason, only in virtue of the possibility that the seeming demands of rational thinking on this subject may be, after all, without sub-

[1] First Principles, § 24.
[2] Ibid., § 31. Compare The Nature and Reality of Religion, a Controversy between Harrison and Spencer, p. 97.

stantial basis. He takes pains to enforce the conclusion that so far as reason may be credited with any competency it requires in our thought of the ultimate reality the rejection of every distinctive feature of personality. "A consciousness," he says, "constituted of ideas and feelings caused by objects and occurrences cannot be simultaneously occupied with all objects and occurrences throughout the universe. To think of divine consciousness men must refrain from thinking what is meant by consciousness." Equally abortive must be the attempt to think of divine intelligence. "Intelligence, as alone conceivable by us, presupposes existences independent of it and objective to it. It is carried on in terms of changes primarily wrought by alien activities—the impressions generated by things beyond consciousness, and the ideas derived from such impressions. To speak of an intelligence which exists in the absence of all such alien activities is to use a meaningless word." In like manner references to the divine will turn out, on examination, to be empty verbiage. It follows that the higher anthropomorphic characters must be dropped as the lower have been. "The conception [of God] which has been enlarging from the beginning must go on enlarging until, by disappearance of its limits, it becomes a consciousness which transcends the forms of distinct thought, though it forever remains a consciousness."[1] A plainer declaration could hardly be made of the conviction both that rational thinking is opposed to the theistic conception, and that the evolutionary process must eliminate that conception. Now, inasmuch as Spencer's interpretation of evolution discredits the supposition that he thought of it as working for the final instatement of a false type of thought or consciousness, he appears on record, not as

[1] The Nature and Reality of Religion, pp. 26–28.

holding a neutral attitude toward theism, but one distinctly adverse.

So far as can be discovered, this adverse attitude was never modified by Spencer. The change which took place in his thought of religion did not consist in the attainment of a more favorable estimate of the rational basis of theism. It consisted simply in the development of a more tolerant feeling for the historical embodiments of religion in doctrines and institutions, in consideration of the needs which they have met. His revised point of view has been expressed in these terms: "I have come more and more to look calmly on forms of religious belief to which I had, in earlier days, a pronounced aversion. Holding that they are in the main naturally adapted to their respective peoples and times, it now seems to me that they should severally live and work as long as the conditions permit, and, further, that sudden changes of religious institutions, as of political institutions, are certain to be followed by reactions."[1]

For a complete view of the bearing of Spencer's teaching on theistic faith it is necessary to consider, besides his more direct statements, the exposition which he has given of the central topic of his philosophy. The question needs to be asked to what extent his theory of evolution contains a virtual affirmation or negation of a personal agent, or supreme intelligence, in connection with the world process. This question invites first of all to a glance at his provision for initiating the evolutionary movement. What, then, is the provision which he has elected for this momentous function? Simply the principle of the instability of the homogeneous, described as a necessary inference from the axiomatic or primordial

[1] Autobiography, II. 547.

truth of the persistence of force—an instability consequent upon the different exposures of the different parts of any aggregate to incident forces. This principle, he maintains, if not strictly of universal validity, is so nearly of that character that there is no real discount on its reliability as a basis of evolutionary theory. We may adopt with scientific confidence the formula, "The absolutely homogeneous must lose its equilibrium, and the relatively homogeneous must lapse into the relatively less homogeneous." This is strictly a law for all cognizable or finite magnitudes. The sole possible exception is to be located beyond that range. "One stable homogeneity only," says Spencer, "is hypothetically possible. If centers of force, absolutely uniform in their powers, were diffused with absolute uniformity through unlimited space they would remain in equilibrium. This, however, though a verbally intelligible supposition, is one that cannot be represented in thought, since unlimited space is inconceivable."[1] The appeal here to the inconceivability of unlimited space cannot be regarded as at all effective for disposing of the supposition in question, since Spencer could not venture to deny that the alternative notion of limited space is equally inconceivable, and in fact has said as much. By his own admission, accordingly, a serious qualification upon the principle of the instability of the homogeneous is left standing. It is seen that this principle must have preëstablished conditions to work upon—conditions for which there is no natural guarantee—or assurance will be wanting that any differentiation will result. But, passing by this consideration, we notice the fact pertinent to the connection, namely, that Spencer's theory of origins includes no slightest reference to intelligent agency. The persistence

[1] First Principles, § 155.

of force being premised as a necessary postulate, the instability of a material aggregate is made the sufficient explanation of the initiation of the world process.

As in the account given of the initiation of evolution, so also in the description of its progress up to organisms and civilizations, nothing is attributed by Spencer to intelligent agency, purpose, or choice. The evolutionary process, as construed by him, starts from a basis described in the terms commonly applied to matter, and goes forward under the operation of a causality which at every point is defined in terms appropriate to what is known as matter. No hint of any other kind of causality appears in the following general formula: "Evolution is an integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."[1] The implication of this formula that the laws of matter and motion furnish a sufficient account of all change and progress in the cosmos comes to frequent expression in the writings of Spencer. Thus it is remarked, "Evolution is a continuous redistribution of matter and motion; and a process of evolution which is not expressible in terms of matter and motion has not been reduced to its ultimate form."[2] It follows, of course, that natural selection may be expressed in terms of matter and motion, and this is asserted in the following sentence: "In recognizing the continuance of life as the continuance of a moving equilibrium, early overthrown in some instances by incident forces and not overthrown in others until after they have reproduced the species, we see that this survival and multiplication of the select becomes conceivable, in

[1] First Principles, § 145. [2] Principles of Biology, I. 548.

purely physical terms, as an indirect outcome of a complex form of the universal redistribution of matter and motion."[1] As the formula of evolution was meant to be all-embracing, the genesis of all mental activities is obviously understood to be referable to matter and motion. "The actions of all organic beings," says Spencer, "including those of our own species, are known to us only as motions," and "the initiator or primary generator of motion is the nervous system." The same changes which, regarded as modes of the ego, are expressed in terms of feeling, are, when regarded as modes of the non-ego, expressed in terms of motion.[2] Mind may be presumed to be the subjective face of the same thing of which nervous action is the objective face[3]; and it is to be understood, according to the tenor of Spencerian representations, that the objective face has the logical priority. Nerves are likewise the efficient antecedents of our recognition of moral distinctions. By continued transmission and accumulation nervous modifications have become faculties of moral intuition.[4]

The conclusion is unavoidable that in the exposition of evolution, which occupies so large a place in the "synthetic philosophy," the theistic conception of intelligent agency back of the world has no place. The whole line of changes, from the primordial homogeneity onward, is treated as properly definable in terms of matter and motion. No causation other than the physical comes into view. An unknowable power is indeed postulated as the ultimate reality, but this power is not permitted to count for anything which cannot be described in materialistic terms. And what practical superiority to matter has such a power, in spite of the mystery with which it

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[1] Autobiography, pp. 115, 116. [2] Principles of Psychology, I. 5, 14, 98.
[3] Ibid., I. 140. [4] Data of Ethics, § 45.

is invested? As a critic of the Spencerian philosophy has said, "The recognition of an unknowable power behind chemistry and physics, yet limited to the laws of chemistry and physics, is equal only to our estimate of chemistry and physics."[1]

The system of Spencer, in short, is antitheistic in tenor, and barely falls short of being a negation of theistic belief. The concession which it makes to theism might be stated succinctly in this form: If anyone is foolish enough to believe that the world-ground is intelligent and personal he is not strictly prohibited from doing so.

II.—Comments on the Spencerian System

A review of Herbert Spencer's philosophy cannot fail to bring to the front these two inquiries: Does he furnish any proper justification of the radical agnosticism which he asserts? Is he successful, to any appreciable degree, in his attempt to construe the universe entirely apart from theistic postulates?

In regard to the agnostic premises which Spencer borrows from his English predecessors, it is a very common verdict in philosophical circles that they are not valid. Hamilton's doctrine that to think is to condition, and that consequently God as the unconditioned is quite beyond the range of thought, is found to be greatly in need of confirmation. If to condition means to limit, then it must be said that there is no warrant for attaching that function to thought universally. In uttering the words unconditioned, infinite, and the like, Hamilton himself, if he put any meaning into his language, made the unlimited the object of his thought. So far was his thinking from being a process of limitation that it was explicitly directed to the end of excluding limitations.

[1] Malcolm Guthrie, Spencer's Data of Ethics, pp. 108–110.

Only through confusing the power of thought with the ability to picture can any plausibility be attached to the Hamiltonian dictum. The picturing faculty is indeed baffled in its attempt to form any distant image of that which rejects all limitations; but thought, as not being in strict bondage to the space category, as able to deploy itself in the qualitative range as well as in the quantitative, can affirm the absence of limits and be aware of what it is doing in making the affirmation. The unlimited, though unpicturable, is not inconceivable. In fact. it is the correlate of the limited and is necessarily grasped in thought along with the limited. Supposing, then, Hamilton to mean what the phrase "to condition" naturally implies, his proposition on the helplessness of thought to apprehend the unconditioned or infinite is simply to be rejected as contradictory to the known facts of our mental operations. If by that phrase he meant to denote the assignment of definite attributes, and held such assignment to be incompatible with the proper conception of the unconditioned or infinite, he was again drawing an unwarranted conclusion. Attributes do not in themselves involve of necessity any limitation. On the contrary, to name the appropriate attributes of the unconditioned and the infinite amounts simply to illustrating the truth that, from every available point of view, the subject in question is indeed the unconditioned and the infinite. Thus the reasoning of Hamilton falls far short of being a philosophical justification of agnosticism.

With all its subtlety the reasoning of Mansel is equally futile. It proceeds on the basis of a gratuitous definition of the absolute as that which rejects all relations. To be sure, the absolute is formally defined simply as that which has a *possible* existence apart from all re-

lations. But in the argument it is treated as the strictly unrelated, that which is intolerant of all relations, interior and exterior. On that basis the conclusion is easily drawn that it cannot be a cause or a self-conscious subject, or indeed aught but an unmitigated blank. But why set up such an absolute as that? What is wanted is the independent or self-sufficient being, the being able to account for the universe as known in experience. Must, now, the self-sufficient be a blank? The very contrary is the rational supposition. Variety in unity is the mark of all affluent being that is known to us, and so must be supposed to be characteristic of the highest conceivable, or that which is self-sufficient and independent. To suppose that the variety contradicts the unity, or involves a demand to select one element to serve as the independent over against the remaining elements viewed as dependent upon it, is to indulge in an illegitimate process of abstraction. Every perfection that can be named is to be regarded as necessarily implied in the reality of the self-sufficient being. It is only by separating the ontologically inseparable and playing with abstractions that trouble is made by the conception of an absolute which is characterized by interior relations, that is, the relations of perfectly harmonious attributes and activities. As regards exterior relations, what the true absolute rejects is merely the enforced or imposed—in other words, relations not consequent upon its own creative activity. It may be objected, it is true, that the notion of creation collides with that of infinitude, as supposing that what had not previously been a source of causal energy should become such and so improve upon its own state. The objection, however, is not appalling. Even if resort is not made to the conception of an eternal exercise of creative power, there remains the conception of a being whose ability to

create is unlimited, incapable of being exhausted in any conceivable product; and to deny infinitude to such a being would have no warrant outside of an artificial application of the quantitative category. In short, what the reasoning of Mansel furnishes is rather an illustration of the entanglements which are entailed by a strained definition of the absolute than a proof that no valid idea of the absolute can be formed.

It was noticed that, besides quoting the representations of Hamilton and Mansel, Spencer found a reason for excluding the absolute or unconditioned from the sphere of cognition in the fact that it is incapable of classification. The assumption seems to be that nothing can be known except through a relation of likeness to something else. But why may not a thing be defined to the mind through relations of contrast? Do men use an unmeaning phrase when they speak of this or that as being *sui generis?* Must intelligible grounds for putting a thing with other things count for knowledge, and intelligible grounds for putting a thing by itself in no wise count for knowledge? Certainly the act of distinguishing the absolute from everything else, if it is a sane procedure, involves some knowledge of the absolute. Moreover it is not to be conceded that no relations of likeness subsist between the absolute and anything else. If it is appropriate to represent the highest under the highest known categories, then we must attribute to it self-consciousness, intelligence, and will. In this point of view the absolute stands at once in relations of likeness and of contrast to ourselves—as possessing attributes that belong to us, but possessing them on a scale that infinitely transcends all human measures.

While Spencer's agnosticism is chargeable with ill-founded and arbitrary premises, it is also open to attack

on the score of quite obvious inconsistencies. In many passages he speaks of the ultimate power, which by hypothesis is entirely unknowable, as being manifested; indeed, he has no scruple about conjoining the two phrases, "unknowable power" and "knowable manifestations." Thus he remarks: "Our postulates are: an unknowable power; the existence of knowable likenesses and differences among the manifestations of that power; and a resulting segregation of the manifestations into those of subject and object."[1] Again he says: "It is one and the same ultimate reality which is manifested to us subjectively and objectively. For, while the nature of that which is manifested under either form proves to be inscrutable, the order of its manifestations throughout all mental phenomena proves to be the same as the order of its manifestations throughout all material phenomena."[2] What better is such language than a conjunction of contradictory terms? It amounts to the declaration that manifestation in no wise manifests. Had the declaration been that finite realities only partially manifest their infinite ground, no objection could be made. But to assert that manifestations do not in the slightest degree fulfill the office of manifestation is to indulge in a bewildering use of speech.

Consistency fails also to be conserved in the descriptive terms which Spencer applies to the unknowable. It is power; it is infinite; it is eternal; it is creative in the sense of being that from which all things proceed. If these terms are warrantable the unknowable would seem to be known to at least some extent. Moreover, there appears to be very slight occasion to confine ourselves to these terms. Why should so much prominence be given to the notion of power? Why should that aspect of reality

[1] First Principles, § 45. [2] Principles of Psychology, I. 627.

be selected, and be projected to infinity, while other aspects which are vitally related to the worth of being are neglected? Why not also raise intelligence, and righteousness, and all the other lofty attributes of personality to their highest terms, and count them characteristic of the ultimate reality? Spencer assuredly has provided no consistent ground for vetoing such a procedure.[1]

Again, the consistency of the Spencerian agnosticism may be challenged as to the antithesis which it affirms between science and religion as dealing respectively with the knowable and the unknowable. "Spencer has failed," says Balfour, "to see that, if the certitudes of science lose themselves in depths of unfathomable mystery, it may well be that out of these same depths there should emerge the certitudes of religion; and that if the dependence of the knowable upon the 'unknowable' embarrasses us not in the one case no reason can be assigned why it should embarrass us in the other."[2]

Once more, Spencer exhibits a very scanty degree of consistency in at once admitting the necessity of religion and denying to it any proper means of sustenance. His testimony to its necessity is sufficiently explicit. "The universality of religious ideas," he says, "their independent evolution among different primitive races, and their great vitality, unite in showing that their source must be deep-seated instead of superficial." Referring to the religious sentiment, he adds: "Here is an attribute which, to say the least, has had an enormous influence—which has played a conspicuous part throughout the entire past as far back as history records, and is at present the life of numerous institutions, the stimulus to perpetual controversies, and the prompter of countless daily actions.

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[1] Compare Iverach, Theism in the Light of Present Science and Philosophy, p. 274.

[2] The Foundations of Belief, p. 296.

Any theory which takes no account of this attribute must, then, be extremely defective."[1] He expresses the expectation that this sentiment or attribute will survive and continue to demand the forming of conceptions of the ultimate reality.[2] But, on the other hand,he requires the religious man to recognize the total unlikeness of any conception which he may form to the reality for which it stands. He condemns religion to extinguish all its positive convictions as false lights, and to acknowledge that its path is in the thick darkness of an absolute mystery from which it can never emerge. In this way, he argues, it will gain the boon of a reconciliation with science. Doubtless in a sense that is true; for, if the program should be strictly carried out, there would not be enough of religion left to seriously antagonize science or anything else. Religion needs something more than the bare postulate of an absolute about whose nature and purpose, if purpose there be, nothing can be known. It cannot live on mystery alone. Pfleiderer did not speak too emphatically when he said, "A religion of nothing but mystery is an absurdity"[3]; and Frederic Harrison was not guilty of intemperate language when he remarked, in relation to the Spencerian scheme, "It would be difficult to find for religion a lower and more idle part to play in human life than that of continually presenting to man a conundrum which he is told he must continually give up."[4]

The second of the proposed inquiries—that respecting the success of Spencer's attempt to construe the universe apart from theistic postulates—involves an inspection of certain assumptions and prominent features

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[1] First Principles, § 4. [2] Ibid., § 31. [3] Philosophy of Religion, II. 159.
[4] Nature and Reality of Religion, a Controversy between Harrison and Spencer, p. 117.

of his theory of evolution. And here we naturally take note, in the first place, of his characterization of the persistence of force (otherwise styled the conservation of energy) as an axiomatic principle or datum of consciousness. Were this a legitimate description, did human consciousness as such attest the persistence of force, or the fact of the "dynamic equivalence of antecedents and consequents in physical change," it would be a marvel that the datum should so often have been ineffective. Why should naturalists come to the recognition of a truth thus attested only on the basis of a careful induction from observed facts? "If this principle lies so wondrous deep, 'deeper even than demonstration, deeper even than definite cognition,' then let Mr. Spencer explain Newton's ignorance of it and the general skepticism that greeted its enunciation by Mayer, Joule, and Helmholtz."[1]

That the author of the synthetic philosophy should wish to represent the principle as established beyond question is intelligible enough, since he had a huge task for it to perform—making it, in fact, the ground from which the changes constitutive of evolution proceed as "necessary consequences." The task, in truth, seems to be much too large for the selected agent. Under the closest examination the persistence of force cannot be seen to explain any given change or to afford a ground for predicting any specific change. It is not a formula which in any wise suggests direction of movement. It simply implies that through all movement and change the original force or sum of energy remains intact. On the Spencerian doctrine of the unknown nature of force the formula cannot yield any further inference. As Malcolm Guthrie remarks: "Since we cannot know the

[1] James Ward, Naturalism and Agnosticism, I. 216. Compare Bowne, Methodist Review, July, 1904.

nature of the original force or energy, we can get no corollaries from it. If we are asked to draw corollaries from the persistence of force, and we know not force, the stress of getting the corollaries is thrown upon the persistence, and the only corollaries derivable therefrom are merely that *if* one kind of force augments another will diminish, and *vice versa.*"[1] With equal incisiveness James Ward says: "The conservation of energy is not a law of change, still less a law of qualities. It does not initiate events, and furnishes absolutely no clue to qualitative diversity. It is entirely a quantitative law. When energy is transformed there is a precise equivalence between the new form and the old; but of the circumstances determining transformation, and of the possible kinds of transformation, the principle tells us nothing."[2]

The criticism passed upon the Spencerian use of the principle of the persistence of force may be substantially duplicated in relation to the famous maxim on the instability of the homogeneous. This maxim is used for much more than it is worth, and the ground of the temptation thus to employ it is quite evident. It gives an aspect of thoroughness to the account rendered of the evolutionary process to represent that process as going back of all differentiation and beginning in the homogeneous; and, of course, if the homogeneous is to serve as the starting point of change, it must be unstable. Thus it comes about that the high-sounding phrase, the "instability of the homogeneous," plays a great rôle in the synthetic philosophy. The phrase, it is claimed, gives expression to a "universal principle."[3] Spencer seems to have found

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[1] Spencer's Unification of Knowledge, pp. 46–49.
[2] Naturalism and Agnosticism, I. 214.
[3] The Factors of Organic Evolution, p. 71.

it necessary, however, to qualify the assumption of its universality, as was noticed in another connection. The truth is, no proof can be given that the homogeneous is intrinsically unstable. On the contrary, the rational supposition is that, without impact from without, an absolutely homogeneous aggregate of being would be incapable of inaugurating any change. And even if instability were predicable of the homogeneous, this principle would account only for the fact of change in general, without affording any insight at all into the reasons for specific changes. As a means of explaining the actual universe the maxim of the instability of the homogeneous is perfectly barren and impotent.

What has been said affords means of judging the general formula of evolution as set forth by Spencer.[1] Like the maxims on which it purports to be founded, it is barren. Being of the nature of vague, external description, it affords no guidance to a real insight into the evolutionary movement. "The requirement of the situation is not that the philosopher should tell us (truly enough) that evolution involves both shrinkings and swellings, both mixings and sortings, both variety and order, but that he should show us *how* these various tendencies are, in the various types of evolutionary process, kept in that peculiar balance which, each time, constitutes an evolution. This is what Spencer seems not to have done."[2]

Notwithstanding the generality of the formula which Spencer employs to describe the evolutionary process, the formula falls far short of covering the facts. The purely materialistic terms in which it is expressed make it of impossible application to wide domains. "Evolution," as has been well said, "may be applied to mind as

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[1] See p. 106.
[2] Royce, Herbert Spencer, an Estimate and Review, pp. 114, 115.

well as to matter in the sense of growing complexity; but what shall we make of the statement that there is an 'integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation'? Thought cannot be stated in terms of matter and motion; there is a gulf between the two. No doubt brain may grow more and more complex as mind advances; but that is a physiological truth, not a truth of psychology. Even if, then, this science exemplifies the evolutionary tendency to complexity, it does not and cannot fulfill Spencer's formulated law of evolution. The case is no less clear as regards sociology and ethics."[1]

It follows that, in defining philosophy as "completely unified knowledge,"[2] Spencer has implicitly rendered an adverse judgment on the philosophical character of his own system. He has not given a unified view of reality. In spite of the formula which is propounded as all-embracing he presents us with disparate realms respecting the interconnection of which, or the method of transition from one to the other, no intelligible account is given. A relation of analogy or general resemblance is indeed established between the purely physical, the biological, the psychological, and the sociological, in so far as in each of these spheres there is an apparent advance from simplicity to complexity; but the mystery which separates one sphere from another is not vanquished. We look in vain in the Spencerian system for the self-consistent, unified representation of reality. The inadequacy of the physical formulas, which have such a controlling place in

[1] Mackintosh, From Comte to Benjamin Kidd, p. 84.
[2] First Principles, § 37.

his philosophy, stands effectually in the way of success in the attempt at unification.

We find, then, that Spencer's endeavor to construe the universe apart from theistic premises was essentially futile. The believer in an absolute which is more than an indefinable somewhat, which in the height and fullness of its attributes answers to the conception of the absolute person, can only have his faith strengthened by the outcome of the Spencerian philosophy. The scientific conclusion that evolution is a great fact may be, and probably is, well grounded; but evolution theory, if we may judge by the system under review, runs into vain pretense when it assumes to dispense with the need of divine intelligence and purposeful action.

III.—Features of Haeckel's Evolutionism

Haeckel's scheme for construing the universe was so largely indicated in connection with the exposition of materialistic theories that only a few supplementary statements are needed. Moreover, the character of his adventures in the domain of philosophy is not such as to justify lengthy consideration. Any distinction which attaches to his name pertains to achievements in specific lines of scientific investigation. As respects a philosophical justification and exposition of evolutionism, his significance is exceedingly slight.

In regard to form, Haeckel's disquisition contrasts with that of Spencer as giving less space to metaphysical elaboration. While the latter exhibits a certain delight in subtle reasoning, the former is so prodigal of dogmatic assertion that one is disposed to inquire where he obtained his diploma to practice as a pope in the world of philosophy. In harmony with this feature Haeckel treats the question of theism with much less reserve than does the

English expositor of evolution. He will not admit the remotest possibility that the world-ground can be personal. With a mental decision which can more properly be termed gnostic than agnostic, he turns the theistic conception out of doors as being absolutely incompatible with scientific verities. In comparison with the unrestrained expression of antipathies indulged in by Haeckel the attitude of Spencer toward the traditional ideals of religion might almost be described as polite.

In construing the primordial being or substance, Haeckel, as has been indicated, makes it a composite, constituted largely, if not exclusively, of very minute particles. Respecting the ether, which is assumed to fill up the spaces between the more palpable entities which are made up of mass atoms, he is not fully decided. "This extremely light and attenuated ether," he says, "causes by its vibrations all the phenomena of light and heat, electricity and magnetism. We can imagine it either as a continuous substance occupying the space between the mass atoms or as composed of separate particles; in the latter case we might perhaps attribute to these ether atoms an inherent power of repulsion in contrast with the immanent attracting power of the mass atoms, and the whole mechanism of cosmic life would then be reducible to the attraction of the latter and the repulsion of the former."[1] While allowing a problematic element in regard to the nature of the ether and also of its precise relation to the mass atoms, Haeckel is positive in the conviction that in these forms of being the whole sum of original existence was comprised, and that from this ground the universe, as known in experience, was derived by a slow process of evolution. "At the outset," he affirms, "there is nothing in infinite space but mobile, elastic ether and innumerable

[1] Monism as Connecting Religion and Science, p. 21.

separate particles—the primitive atoms scattered throughout it in the form of dust."[1]

A peculiarity in the theory of Haeckel is his claim that the atoms possess in some sort a psychical character. He denies, indeed, that they have consciousness,[2] but holds that they are characterized by sensation, these two being "different physiological functions, which are by no means necessarily associated." He admits that most chemists and physicists repudiate the notion of atomic sensation. His own faith, however, in this notion is very decided. "Every shade," he says, "of inclination, from complete indifference to the fiercest passion, is exemplified in the chemical relation of the various elements toward each other, just as we find in the psychology of man, and especially in the life of the sexes. . . . Even the atom is not without a rudimentary form of sensation and will, or, as it is better expressed, of feeling and inclination."[3] "When we rub together sulphur and mercury, two totally different elements, the atoms of the finely divided matter combine and form a third and different chemical body, cinnabar. How would this simple synthesis be possible unless the two elements *feel* each other, move toward each other, and *then* unite?"[4] Thus the scientist, who is so ready to lampoon the historical embodiments of religious thoughts, constructs on his own account a fantastic mythology.

The imputation of a psychical characteristic to the primitive atoms might seem to have a certain advantage over the purely materialistic theory as implying a less magical genesis of mind or soul. But the advantage amounts to very little so far as the system of Haeckel is

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[1] Monism, p. 34.
[2] The Riddle of the Universe, pp. 179, 180; Wonders of Life, pp. 289, 290.
[3] The Riddle of the Universe, pp. 224, 225. [4] Wonders of Life, p. 309.

concerned. He gives no sort of an explanation of how these ultimate and irreducible individuals, called atoms, which are assumed to be dowered with sensation but to be void of consciousness, can be combined into a unitary conscious subject. Furthermore, he as good as ignores the psychic element in the atoms, assigning to it no intelligible function in the production of the thinking conscious self, but referring all to physical and chemical agency. "Consciousness," he says, "like all the other mental powers, is a function of the brain, and may be reduced to physical and chemical processes in the cells of the cortex." Again, in a passage already cited, he remarks, "The soul is merely a collective title to the sum total of man's cerebral functions; and these are just as much determined by physical and chemical processes as are any of the other vital functions, and just as amenable to the law of substance."[1] In short, the verbal acknowledgment of a primitive psychical element cannot be seen to modify appreciably the essential materialism of Haeckel's system.

Haeckel's substitute for a personal God is about as strange as are his mythological atoms with their loves and hates. In one connection he says: "Religion in its reasonable forms can take over the ether theory as an article of faith, bringing into contradistinction the mobile cosmic ether as creating divinity, and the inert, heavy mass as material of creation."[2] That both of these factors may properly enter into the definition of God is indicated in this statement: "We might represent God as the infinite sum of natural forces, the sum of all atomic forces and ether vibrations."[3] To make God thus a sum, a being reached by the addition of one infinitesimal entity or activity to another, has its difficulty for philosophical think-

[1] The Riddle of the Universe, p. 204
[2] Monism p. 24
[3] Ibid., pp. 78, 79.

ing. There is also this perplexing fact, that, according to the judgment of Haeckel, atomic forces and ether vibrations exhibit very largely the reverse of both wisdom and benevolence. They combine to make a world which is the scene of an "unceasing and terrible war of existence," a world in which it is impossible to detect wise providence or moral order.[1] It follows, therefore, with indisputable logic from the premises of Haeckel that his God is at best a union of the divine and the diabolical, so that he is parading a transparent abstraction when he sets up the True, the Beautiful, and the Good as the object of worship. Possibly an inkling of the shabbiness of the substitute which he offered for Christian theism may explain the small ambition which he has exhibited to go forward with his attempt to found a monistic religion.

IV.—Recent Teachings More or Less Affiliated with Agnostic or with Antitheistic Premises

The teaching of Albrecht Ritschl and also of his school, as represented by Herrmann, Kaftan, Harnack, Reischle, and others, deserves no association with antitheistic speculation and only a qualified one with agnosticism. The occasion, therefore, for mentioning that teaching in this connection is not very cogent, except as there is a demand for a judicial estimate of the position of a party which has been the subject of somewhat diverse judgments.

The challenge of Ritschl was directed not so much against the trustworthiness of religious or theological convictions as against the competency of metaphysics to make any real contribution to the subject-matter of religion or theology. In thus limiting the office of metaphysics he was not appropriating the platform of a radical phenomenalism or positivism. With Lotze, he qualified the Kan-

[1] Monism, pp. 71–74; The Riddle of the Universe, pp. 272–274.

tian antithesis between phenomena and things-in-themselves, and held that through phenomena we have a real, though partial, knowledge of things. He also credited to metaphysics a useful office on the side of method. In so far as it is concerned with the theory of knowledge it furnishes a proper conception of the limitations which attach to speculative thinking, and thus advises against placing too large a dependence upon that instrumentality. But at this point its good offices come to an end. It can furnish nothing better than a general conception of the world-ground, a conception which is quite incapable of being put to theological use. The true basis for theology is not contained in the findings of pure intellect or in judgments of truth; it is found rather in the historical and experiential, in revelation accredited to the individual by the response which it calls forth in his emotional and volitional nature. The objects of faith are made such by the worth with which they are invested. They are, indeed, accounted real, but confidence in their reality is based in the sense of their value. Judgments of value constitute thus the characteristic function of the religious man and furnish the one available ground for theological construction. This is the great contention of the Ritschlian school. While not entirely uniform in their conceptions, the members of that school make much account of the antithesis between the theoretical and the practical, between judgments of truth and judgments of value, and emphasize the latter as properly controlling the subject-matter of theology.

As against the overplus of the theoretical element, which often has cumbered the theological domain, the Ritschlian point of view is doubtless very largely in the right. Still it is properly subject to criticism as making a somewhat artificial contrast between the theoretical and

the practical, between the demands of intellect and the requirements of the emotional and volitional nature. In so far as judgments are supposed to conform only to the latter class of demands, a species of agnostic disparagement is visited upon them. Generally speaking, judgments do not belong exclusively to the one domain or the other. The nature of man requires satisfaction on its intellectual side, and necessarily recognizes, implicitly or explicitly, a worth in that which renders the satisfaction. On the other hand, the apparent worth of objects which appeal to the emotional and volitional nature of man cannot to be altogether independent of an estimate of their truth or their harmonious relation to the general system of reality. From this point of view metaphysical inquiry becomes pertinent. Indeed, it is in constant demand as an auxiliary of a scientific Christian theology. Even if metaphysics cannot say the decisive word on most theological questions, it has a highly important office to fulfill in showing that no datum of reason stands against any essential tenet of the Christian system. While it is no substitute for the value judgment, it is capable of serving as a useful supplement thereto. In order to afford a firm basis of confidence the value judgment needs to furnish guarantees that it is not merely personal, or the product of an eccentric subjectivity. In supplying such guarantees the best work will not be done short of thorough inquiry in the field of metaphysics as well as in that of history. Of course, the religious man cannot wait for such work, but directly or indirectly he may reap from it no inconsiderable benefit.[1]

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[1] See Ritschl, Theologie und Metaphysik; also The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation; Herrmann, The Communion of the Christian with God; Kaftan, Das Wesen der Christlichen Religion; Reischle, Werturtheile und Glaubensurtheile; Ecke, Theologische Schule Ritschl's; Garvie, The Ritschlian Theology; Flügel, Ritschl's Philosophische und

A party among French Protestants has advocated a conception of the basis of Christian theology which is not unlike the Ritschlian. It makes faith, in the sense of *fiducia,* the central element in religion, emphasizes experience of the moral and religious order as the one valid basis of doctrinal construction, and insists upon the symbolical character of all the terms which attempt to express the objects of religious thought and feeling. The standpoint of the party may be judged from the following statements of a prominent representative, Auguste Sabatier: "What is not in religious experience should find no place in religious science and should be banished from it. . . . Rational truths not born of religious feeling would be in dogmatics so many dead weights and heterogeneous elements, which would lead to the greatest incoherence. . . . The object of religious knowledge only reveals itself in the subject of the religious phenomena themselves. . . . God only reveals himself in and by piety."[1] "With Schleiermacher the Protestant consciousness finally passed the strait which separates the theology of authority from the theology of experience. Religious truth could no longer be given by an oracle; henceforth it must spring out of Christian experience itself, and never cease to reproduce itself in pious souls, under the permanent influence of the Spirit of Christ. Holy Scripture could no longer be the foundation of faith; it became an auxiliary, a means of grace."[2] "Religious knowledge is symbolical. All the notions it forms and organizes, from the first metaphor created by religious feeling to the most abstract theological speculation, are

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Theologische Ansichten; Pfleiderer, Die Ritschl'sche Theologie; Swing, The Theology of Ritschl; Orr, The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith; Keirstead, Metaphysical Presuppositions of Ritschl, American Journal of Theology, Oct., 1905.

[1] Outlines of Philosophy of Religion, pp. 273–308.

[2] Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit, p. 210.

necessarily inadequate to their object. . . . Symbols are the only language suited to religion. We need to know that which we adore; but it is not less necessary that we should not comprehend it, for one does not adore that which he comprehends too clearly, because to comprehend is to dominate. Such is the twofold and contradictory condition of piety, to which symbols seem to be made expressly to respond. Piety has never had any other language."[1]

The general theory of Sabatier, like that of Ritschl, doubtless has its rights, as against much of the speculative elaboration of past times. Some of its statements, however, savor of a one-sided subjectivity. As respects the degree of agnosticism pertaining to his scheme, the verdict must depend upon the sense in which he is understood to make the expressions of religious truths symbolical. If the symbols are construed as mere arbitrary signs, then we have the pronounced agnosticism of Spencer. But Sabatier and his associates seem not to have taken them in that sense. They are not, therefore, chargeable with a radical agnosticism.

In Benjamin Kidd's exposition of social evolution expressions occur which seem to savor of agnosticism, in that they place religion outside the domain of reason. "There can never be," he says, "such a thing as a rational religion. The essential element in all religious beliefs must apparently be the ultra-rational sanction which they provide for social conduct. When the fundamental nature of the problem involved in our social evolution is understood it must become clear that that general instinct which may be distinguished in the minds of men around us is in the main correct, and that no form

[1] Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion, pp. 322, 327.

of belief is capable of functioning as a religion in the evolution of society which does not provide an ultra-rational sanction for social conduct in the individual. In other words, a rational religion is a scientific impossibility, representing from the nature of the case an inherent contradiction of terms."[1]

Such language might seem to challenge the claim of religion to respect. But it was quite remote from the intention of Mr. Kidd to have his words taken as a warrant for disparagement. On the contrary, he maintains that nothing in evolutionary theory or modern discovery tends properly to diminish our estimate of the value and necessity of religion. He ascribes to it a utilitarian function of immense import, and criticises the account which Spencer gives of it in his Sociology as being beneath the demands of the subject. "It is hard," he says, "to follow the author, in his theories of the development of religious beliefs from ghosts and ancestor worship, without a continual feeling of disappointment, and even impatience, at the triviality and comparative insignificance of the explanations offered to account for the development of such an imposing class of social phenomena."[2]

A large part of the explanation of the ultra-rational character assigned to religion by Mr. Kidd is contained in his conception of the office of reason. What reason has to do is simply to direct man in the path of self-interest. It never dictates the sacrifice of self. There is in it no element of altruism. Its gaze is always fixed upon the good of the individual, not upon that of society. A man becomes the servant of his kind only through the constraint of a power in conflict with his reason, and that power is, above all, religion.

In this representation justice is not done to reason, and

[1] Social Evolution, pp. 108, 109. [2] Ibid, pp. 22–24.

therefore fails also to be done to religion. Reason is shut up to the contemplation of self-interest, of self-interest in the sense of immediate gratifications of a purely self-regarding order. But why may not reason take the larger view, in which the antithesis between the interest of self and the interest of one's fellows is for the most part overcome? Why may it not recognize that the isolated life is barren and desolate, that withholding impoverishes, that giving enriches, that no investment can bring such revenue to man's spirit as expenditure for the well-being and happiness of others? This certainly must be the case if wisdom, righteousness, and benevolence are back of the world system in which man is inclosed. Thus, while self-interest is far from being the only motive in the performance of social offices, there is no essential antagonism between it and such offices, and reason is not tied up to the one as against the other. In the larger view reason is seen to join hands with altruism, and the occasion falls away to consider religion as ultra-rational or as the source of an ultra-rational sanction.

The very subtle treatise of F. H. Bradley, entitled Appearance and Reality, recalls both Hegel and Schelling. An affinity with the thinking of the former is apparent in the close association which is made between reality and experience, or rather in the identification of all reality with the experience of absolute spirit. Thus it is said, "Reality is sentient experience. To be real is to be indissolubly one thing with sentience. It is to be something which comes as a feature and aspect within one whole of feeling, something which, except as an integral element of such sentience, has no meaning at all. . . . Every element of the universe, sensation, feeling, thought, and will, must be included within one compre-

hensive sentience. . . . There is but one reality, and its being consists in experience. In this one whole all appearances come together."[1] The point of affinity with Schelling lies in the conception that the absolute is above all contrasts, being that in which all distinctions, if not strictly obliterated, are so transformed as to be quite beyond any power of representation with which we are endowed. "Spirit," says Bradley, "is a unity of the manifold in which the externality of the manifold has utterly ceased. . . . It is above the relational form and has absorbed it in a higher unity, a whole in which there is no division between elements and laws. . . . Pure spirit is not realized except in the absolute."[2] "We have no knowledge of a plural diversity, nor can we attach any sense to it, if we do not have it somehow as one."[3]

Formally considered, Bradley's teaching is not emphatically agnostic. In fact, he is far from approving the Spencerian talk about the unknowable. "The unknowable," he says, "must be prepared to deserve the name or not. But, if it actually were not knowable, we could not know that such a thing existed."[4] "To say that reality is such that our knowledge cannot reach it, is a claim to know reality; to urge that our knowledge is of a kind which must fail to transcend appearance, itself implies that transcendence. For, if we had no idea of a beyond, we should assuredly not know how to talk about failure or success. And the test by which we distinguish them must obviously be some acquaintance with the nature of the goal. . . . I am so bold as to believe that we have a knowledge of the absolute, certain and real, though I am sure that our comprehension is miserably incomplete. But

[1] Appearance and Reality, pp. 146, 159, 455. [2] Ibid., p. 499.
[3] Ibid., p. 141. [4] Ibid., p. 129.

I dissent emphatically from the conclusion that, because imperfect, it is worthless."[1]

Though repudiating a sweeping denial of our competency to know the absolute, Bradley's teaching is both agnostic and antitheistic in tendency. It is chargeable with both characteristics for the same reason, namely, a denial of the proper applicability to the absolute of the categories by which personal and ethical being is represented to our minds. Even the term God is declared to be inapplicable, as standing for a too partial and figurate conception. "We may say that God is not God till he has become all in all, and that a God which is all in all is not the God of religion. God is but an aspect, and that must mean but an appearance, of the absolute."[2] There is no propriety, it is maintained, in calling the absolute personal, or good, or beautiful. It has indeed personality, goodness, and beauty; but it is not any one of these any more than it is their opposites. It is to be considered not so much personal and moral as super-personal and super-moral. In other words, if we catch Bradley's meaning we are only authorized to assume in the absolute the indefinable grounds of that which comes forth in the realm of appearances as personal, moral, and beautiful.[3] Being thus forbidden to employ the highest categories which have any meaning for our minds, we are left by Bradley's speculation with exceedingly scanty means for representing the absolute. The primal unity of Neo-Platonism could not make a more dim or distant object for our thought.

This barren outcome may be regarded as the product of an intemperate effort to push thought beyond the plane of all distinctions. Bradley is by far too intolerant of the notion of an intelligible manifoldness or diversity as

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[1] Appearance and Reality, pp. 2, 3

[2] Ibid., p. 448.

[3] Ibid., pp. 173, 402, 488, 533.

pertaining to ultimate being. He exaggerates the logical demand for representing the real and ultimate as that which is above all difference, or at least above all namable difference. The greater demand lies on the side of so construing the absolute that a satisfactory account can be given of the manifold in the universe, and especially of the diversities of which we are immediately cognizant as self-conscious personalities. That the universe contains that which appears to us as impersonal affords small occasion for positing a nonpersonal ground, since will is a fundamental element in the conception of personality, and the energizing of a personal, infinite will is the most intelligible account that can be given of that impression of an external world which forms part of the experience of finite personalities.

It might be expected that reference would be made in this connection to Professor Huxley, since he both invented the term "agnosticism" and declared it descriptive of his own standpoint. But Huxley was little concerned with the deeper problems of speculation. As an agnostic he devoted himself principally to the task of vexing the theologians on questions which touch the province of biblical criticism; and here the products of his pen were not of sufficient import to claim much attention from any but the contemporary generation. In so far as he battled to secure a fair hearing for science he is deserving of respect and praise. But the spirit which he manifested in his excursions into the theological domain was not particularly scientific. "In his temper and mental habits, in his attitude toward what he believed the truth, Huxley was as veritable a dogmatist as any of his theological antagonists."[1]

[1] Schurman, Agnosticism and Religion, p. 12.

Other names associated with agnostic or antitheistic theories might be mentioned; but most of them do not stand for any distinctive type outside of those already characterized. Probably the teaching of E. de Roberty has as much claim to peculiarity as any. In form that teaching is very largely a polemic against agnosticism, representing Comte, Spencer, and kindred speculators as fulfilling, in spite of their antipathy toward theology and metaphysics, a theological and metaphysical rôle in their postulate of the unknowable. "Religious faith or metaphysics and the beliefs of agnosticism," says De Roberty, "appear to us as perfectly homologous groups of sociological phenomena, fulfilling essentially the same functions and following the same laws of metamorphosis. . . . The supernatural and the unknowable are only two different names applied to one and the same object. . . . The unknowable is well-nigh the only phantom of the theological past of humanity which has not been exorcised by science."[1] All such unreal abstractions, it is asserted, as the unknowable and the absolute should be discarded. In their place it suffices to speak of the *verifiable* and the *unverifiable,* and it should be recognized that the provinces to which these terms respectively apply are of changing boundaries. In the normal mental process account will be taken only of the results reached by the concrete sciences and of such deductions as are legitimated by these results.

Evidently the tenor of De Roberty's teaching implies that the subject-matter of theology and religion lies outside the range of scientific deductions. His scheme, therefore, as repudiating an attempt to construe ultimate reality, is of the agnostic type, notwithstanding its seeming hostility to agnosticism. Neither is it consistent or

[1] L'Inconnaissable, pp. 24, 25, 56.

profound in the contempt which it expresses for metaphysics. No one reasons without resort to metaphysical premises. There is absolutely no safeguard against the mischief of a faulty metaphysics, except that which is to be found in a sound metaphysics. As Professor James has remarked, "Metaphysics means only an unusually obstinate attempt to think clearly and consistently."[1]

[1] Cited by H. C. King, Theology and the Social Consciousness, p. 36.

CHAPTER V

PESSIMISM

I.—The Teaching of Schopenhauer

As a form of philosophy pessimism, in its Occidental phase, belongs mainly to the second half of the nineteenth century. It is true that Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the pioneer of this species of philosophy, published his principal work, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, as early as 1818. But exceedingly scanty attention was given to the work till the middle of the century. Even after that date the confessed disciples of the pessimistic philosopher were relatively few. His thinking, however, has commanded considerable attention for several decades. Naturally, the boldness and novelty of his creed, the mordant character of his diatribes, and the real acuteness of his exposition of various themes have claimed a measure of notice from a generation that has become rather loose in its attachments to the great philosophical systems of the past.

With a wolfish hunger for the applause of the very world which he affected to despise, Schopenhauer combined an enormous vanity, or confidence in his own philosophical primacy. This made it impossible for him to grant to contemporary philosophers anything like a cordial recognition. Of Hegel in particular he spoke uniformly in terms of bitter contempt. In a characteristic reference to the Hegelian system he described it as "this most miserable of all the meager philosophies that ever existed."[1] His estimate of other systems belonging to his

[1] Religion and Other Essays, trans. by Saunders, p. 68.

own age was only less disparaging. "As far as Germany is concerned," he remarked, "the total philosophical incompetence of the first half of the century following upon Kant is plain."

The philosophies of Kant and Plato and the early systems of India were the intellectual products of the past to which Schopenhauer considered special deference to be due. The first of these he did not profess to follow throughout. He disagreed with prominent features of the Kantian ethics, and had no sympathy at all with the Kantian partiality for the theistic conception. But his formal estimate of Kant was high, and he believed that he stood in substantial agreement with the Kantian teaching on a number of topics, notably on the contrast between the real and the ideal, on the thing-in-itself, on the *a priori* forms of the understanding, on the opposition between the intelligible and the empirical character, and on the coëxistence of freedom and necessity.[1]

The Platonic teaching which specially appealed to Schopenhauer was the doctrine of the ideas. These he construed as the immediate and only adequate objectification of the ultimate reality, the true universals which science names in its reference to species, subsisting above the limitations of time and space, always existing and never becoming, and thus standing in wide contrast with the sense world which is ever becoming but never attains to real being. As related to the things of the phenomenal sphere, the ideas are the perfect patterns, full conformity to which is nowhere realized."[2]

Toward the philosophical speculations and religious ideas of India the attitude of Schopenhauer was one of

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[1] Compare Hecker, Schopenhauer und die Indische Philosophie, p. 6.

[2] Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, third edition, I. 153, 201–209, §§ 25, 31–33.

warm appreciation. He spoke of the Hindu as the "wisest of all mythologies," and characterized the Vedas as "the fruit of the highest human knowledge and wisdom." He described the publication of the Upanishads as "the greatest gift of the century." He confessed that, if the outcome of his own philosophy were to be taken as a measure, Buddhism must be given the preference among religions, and maintained that the consideration for the welfare of animals characteristic of both Buddhism and Brahmanism showed them to be nearer perfection than either Judaism or Christianity. He saw in the kinship between certain Christian ideas and the doctrines of Hinduism evidence that the former were shaped in some way by the latter.[1] In practical advertisement of his affiliation with the Oriental systems he named his dog Atman and kept a statuette of Buddha in his chamber.

Schopenhauer interpreted his relation to Hindu philosophy and religion to be one of simple agreement rather than one of dependence. It is not improbable, however, that the tone and content of his thinking received some positive impress from that quarter, since already before writing his principal work he had begun to make acquaintance with the ancient literature of India. What is certain is that in his system elements like those found in the Vedanta philosophy, or the orthodox philosophy of Brahmanism, are blended with points of view that are essentially Buddhistic. In common with the Vedanta philosophy Schopenhauer affirmed one sole substance, the all-one. He agreed also with that philosophy in regarding this one substance as impersonal. He agreed likewise with it in following out these pantheistic premises to a denial of the proper conception of individual souls.

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[1] Die Welt als Wille, I. 324, 419, II. 186; Religion and Other Essays, pp. 112, 115.

On the other hand, he diverged from the Vedanta system in emphasizing will, rather than intellect or reason, as the thing of supreme theoretical and practical interest. At this point he approached Buddhism. With the Buddhistic pessimism, which represents the world system as interwoven with misery, he was in full accord. He also approved the Buddhistic conception of salvation as consisting essentially in a negation of the will and a recession into an absolute quietism. Doubtless, a complete correspondence cannot be traced between the thinking of Schopenhauer and the content of either Brahmanism or Buddhism, but with approximate fidelity to the facts his system can be described as a combination of the two. "The philosophy of Schopenhauer," says Professor Hecker, "is emphatically a synthesis of Brahmanism, in the form of the Vedanta, and Buddhism. . . . His metaphysics is the pantheistic Vedanta doctrine of identity; his ethics the annihilation of desire taught by Buddha."[1]

The basal conceptions of Schopenhauer are indicated by the title which he chose for his principal work, The World as Will and Idea [or Representation]. Will and its phenomenal expression make up, in his view, the sum of reality. The thing-in-itself of which Kant spoke is simply will. This it is which is back of all phenomena, of whatever order. Force or energy is not a name for that which includes will; on the contrary, every force in nature falls properly under the designation of will. As thing-in-itself, will is above the categories of space, time, causality, and necessity. The sphere of these categories is the sphere of the phenomenal. Here they have full sway. And in saying this we affirm their application to the individual; for, as related to the thing-in-itself, "the individual is only phenomenon." The individual, accord-

[1] Schopenhauer und die Indische Philosophie, p. 254.

ingly, falls under the law of causality, and, being determined in each act by a causal antecedent, must be regarded as destitute of freedom in the sense of alternativity. To the individual the world stands as appearance. Matter has no meaning apart from the percipient individual. Materialism, therefore, is at fault in attempting to explain that which is immediately given by that which is mediately given, the knowing subject by the appearance. Of the world of appearance the body is the part which holds direct relation with the individual. Every act of his will is at the same time a movement of his body. In fact, "the whole body is nothing else than the objectified will, that is, the will brought to manifestation."[1]

As appears from the above, the formal attitude of Schopenhauer toward materialism was distinctly hostile. Nevertheless he indulged in statements which have a decided resemblance to materialistic postulates. Not only did he make knowledge purely instrumental to will; he described the intellect as a mere function of the brain. "The intellect," he declared, "is as transitory as the brain, whose product, or rather action, it is. The brain, however, like the entire bodily organism, is product or manifestation of the will, which is alone permanent."[2] Predicating thus only a perishing intellect, or instrument of knowledge, for the individual man, Schopenhauer evidently could make no provision for the thought of personal immortality. That he should have no wish to make the provision was dictated by his radical pessimism.

As Schopenhauer conceived, the world is necessarily bad because the source from which it proceeds is a principle of restless, unsatisfied striving. This tendency belongs to will as such, and it must therefore pervade its concrete forms. Man in particular, as being the most per-

[1] Die Welt als Wille, I. 119. [2] Ibid., II. 224.

fect objectification of will, is full of needs and remote from satisfaction. An imperious impulse drives him to strive for the maintenance of the life which is not worth having; and the striving, too, is without any assurance of the desired result, since nature, respecting only the species, has no care or mercy for the individual. His pursuit of positive enjoyment is ever an illusion, the best that can be attained being the abridgment of pain. Man tires of the very life which he fights desperately to sustain, until at length its insipidity and tediousness paint veritable despair upon his face. His life is like bad ware with nothing better to commend it than a false glitter; and it runs its course, in the great majority of cases, with about as little understanding of its purpose and meaning as belongs to a wound-up clock. Where the preponderance lies, as between weal and woe, is strikingly illustrated by Dante. When he wished to paint hell he found in this world no lack of materials for concrete delineations. When, on the other hand, he wished to paint heaven, he could discover no suitable materials, and proceeded to report, not the joys of paradise, but the instruction vouchsafed to him by Beatrice and various saints. While thus man is placed in a world which is lavishly provided with the proper furniture of hell, he is not even permitted to find compensation for his misery in the thought of his nobility and good desert; for his misery is an authentic measure of his worthlessness and guilt. At this point the pessimism of Schopenhauer seems to pass over into a kind of optimism, since he asserts the perfect reign of justice in the world. And in truth we should have here a gleam of optimistic faith had the reign of justice been conceived to lead on to anything better than blankness and nothingness.[1]

[1] Die Welt als Wille, I. 325–415, §§ 54–63.

Inasmuch as the source of misery was located by our pessimistic philosopher in blindly operating will, he naturally located the remedy in the negation of the will. This act of negation he considered dependent upon knowledge. When a man attains to an enlightened vision of the vanity of all pursuit after enjoyment, and discovers that desire is the bitter fountain of unrest and pain, then he is prepared to choose the only haven of peace, the state of complete quiescence. Thus he gains in the present a relative redemption anticipatory of that more perfect emancipation which is wrought by the extinction of individual existence in death.

As was noticed, Schopenhauer found in Buddhism the most satisfactory anticipation both of his pessimistic view of life and of his notion of salvation. He considered, however, that original Christianity afforded a fairly close parallel to his way of thinking, the other-worldliness and cross-bearing taught by Christ being interpreted by him as genuine tokens of a pessimistic standpoint. Among Christian ideas he valued in particular those which relate to the facts of original sin and redemption. Judaism with its monotheistic creed he thoroughly contemned, but conceded that in its doctrine of the fall it had served to propagate a highly important truth. Of the mystical element in religion he was rather tolerant. Indeed, he considered that those who have an ambition to pare away all the mystery of religion are rendering to it the poorest sort of service. Accordingly, he greatly preferred Augustine and Luther to all rationalizing expounders of Christianity. "Rationalism in the form of modern free thought or antisupernaturalism was to Schopenhauer about the poorest and blindest and the most ignorant of all philosophies."[1]

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[1] Caldwell, Schopenhauer's System in its Philosophical Significance, p. 384.

As an offset to the one-sided intellectualism of the Hegelian system, Schopenhauer's philosophy, with its predominant stress upon the will, may have been adapted to render a certain service. It may be granted also that on individual points it reveals a very good insight. But taken in its entirety it has very scanty claims to appreciation. Not only is it bizarre and extreme, it is also burdened with a very uncomfortable list of self-contradictions. A veritable heap of inconsistencies appears, for instance, in the place and function assigned to the intellect. On the one hand, the intellect is regarded as the product of an antecedent world running through various stages of organization up to the human brain; on the other hand, it is made the necessary antecedent of the world system, since only through the forms of the intellect does the world have existence as a system, a unity characterized by manifoldness and conformity to law. On the one hand, the intellect is described as a mere function of the brain; on the other hand, the brain, as known only to the intellect, is made a phenomenon to the intellect; in other words, that which is defined as having the place or character of a subject is made a phenomenon to that which is defined as having the character of a function. On the one hand, the intellect is denied the nature of a subject proper, since it is made a mere product or form of activity of a physical organism; on the other hand, it is treated as a proper subject, an agent equipped with powers of discrimination, comparison, and logical procedure in system building. On the one hand, the intellect holds an abject position as a mere instrument of the will; on the other hand, the intellect in the proper course of things comes to a mastery over the will, and restrains it even to the point of complete cancellation.[1] On the one

[1] Compare Kuno Fischer, Schopenhauer's Leben, Werke und Lehre.

hand, as being the product of irrational will, the intellect would seem to be destitute of any valid claim to rationality; on the other hand, Schopenhauer philosophizes with a supreme confidence which distinctly implies that intellect, as embodied in himself, is beyond question rational. Glaring contradictions are also observable in other relations. Thus Schopenhauer asserts that the world has moral significance, and stigmatizes the opposite view as "the greatest and most pernicious of all errors."[1] But what basis is there in his fundamental conception for attributing a moral significance to the world? According to that conception the one reality, of which the world is the manifestation, is blind aberrant will, which exercises its creative function so badly as to make a world which may be described as the worst possible. What a theater for the presentation and glorification of ethical ideals! Who can draw inspiration for righteousness from the contemplation of such a supreme being? What can there be worth working for under such an administration? Practical extinction of self and the abolition of the world, says Schopenhauer; and the answer is not illogical from his standpoint. But what kind of a moral world is that which thrusts upon men the one task of working toward its own abolition and the throwing of all things back into the primitive night of unconscious will? What wisdom, benevolence, or righteousness can be discovered in this imposition of painful struggle after nothingness? The fact is that on the basis of the rank pessimism of Schopenhauer the world is too much of a madhouse to make it consistent to attempt to find in it any ethical meaning or any ground whatever of rational interpretation.

It was noticed that Schopenhauer construed the other-

[1] Essay on Human Nature.

worldliness of Jesus and his doctrine of cross-bearing as equivalent to the assertion of the pessimistic standpoint. The legitimacy of the interpretation can in no wise be admitted. Between placing at the center of the universe a blind aberrant power, which is totally regardless of the weal of the individual, and placing there the benignant form of the heavenly Father who notes the fall of the sparrow, who numbers the very hairs upon the heads of his children, and whose tender, all-comprehending care makes it unnecessary to borrow anxious thought about the morrow, there is an enormous difference. The controlling view of Jesus was so emphatically optimistic that in the light of it human life in the world, in spite of all demands of cross-bearing, is made to appear rather as a cheerful and glorious than a somber and dismal thing. It is only by a fundamental caricature that the message of Jesus can be made tributary to pessimism.

II.—Von Hartmann and Other Advocates of Pessimism.

In 1869, or nine years after the death of Schopenhauer, Eduard Von Hartmann published a system of pessimistic philosophy under the title Die Philosophie des Unbewussten. This was supplemented in the following years by numerous other writings. While influenced by Schopenhauer, and earning a close association with him on the score of his radical pessimism, Von Hartmann was not in an emphatic sense a disciple of his predecessor. He has himself taken pains to publish this fact. Many topics are enumerated by him on which he claims to be in contrast with Schopenhauer. The subjective idealism of the latter which reduces the world to appearance, his monism by which all is merged in will, his scanty regard for historical development, his

mained and inconsistent treatment of teleology, his doctrine of the intelligible character (itself undetermined and the source of determination to the individual in his empirical character), his affiliation in his theory of salvation with a radical quietism—all these are features, says Von Hartmann, with which he stands in disagreement.[1] He makes plain also that he does not share his predecessor's unqualified contempt for Hegelianism. Indeed, he expresses high appreciation for certain aspects of Hegelianism, and defines his own philosophy as a "synthesis of the philosophies of Hegel and Schopenhauer, in which a decided preponderance is given to the former, a synthesis formed under the guidance of Schelling's doctrine of principles as contained in his first philosophy."[2]

In his attitude toward the Hindu pantheism Von Hartmann was well-nigh as appreciative as Schopenhauer. Religion, he contended, must embrace the essence of the pantheism of the East, if it is to survive and be a world-power.[3] Respecting Christianity he spoke often in very disparaging terms. He declared it no longer a vital factor in our civilization. Its characteristic forms, he said, are all outlived, and soon, reduced to a shadow of its mediæval greatness, it will again be what it was exclusively at the start, the last consolation of the poor and the wretched. On the other hand, it may be noticed that he was not content to be rated as a despiser of Christianity. "I have, in fact," he said, "the greatest respect for the Christian religion as representing one of the most developed stages of the religious consciousness, and in religion as a whole I venerate the deepest spring and the highest summit of the life of the spirit."[4] Like

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[1] Ergänzungsband zu ersten bis neunten Auflage der Philosophie des Unbewussten, Vorwort zur zehnte Auflage, p. ix. [2] Ibid., p. x.

[3] Philosophy of the Unconscious, trans. by Coupland. II. 270, 271; Religion of the Future, trans by Dare, p. 97. [4] Ergänzungsband, p. xv.

Schopenhauer, he made place for a mystic element in religion. In agreement with his predecessor also, he considered an ultra-liberal Protestantism about the poorest apology for a religion that could be found.

The system of Von Hartmann is no less antitheistic than that of Schopenhauer. In his conception of ultimate or absolute being, however, the former differs from the latter in that he supposes intellect or reason to coëxist in that being with will. The absolute is indeed unconscious, but, as is illustrated by instinct, purpose may work apart from consciousness. Thus it operates in the absolute. In that timeless being an unconscious ideation and an unconscious willing are conjoined in inseparable unity. Though unconscious, the absolute is not to be esteemed blind, but rather clairvoyant.

In ascribing intelligence and purposive action to the absolute, Von Hartmann would seem to close the door against error on its part. But, in pursuance of his pessimism, he was obliged to admit that the world, if not the worst possible, is assuredly vastly worse than none. He was therefore put under compulsion to construe the origination of the world as a great error. And this he has done. He characterizes the production of the world as an "irrational act," a bare activity of will in which reason had no part. The misery of existence, he argues, makes it impossible to impute creation to aught but the "mere groundless will."[1]

In his extravagant estimate of the misery in the world Von Hartmann comes very near to the standard set by his predecessor. He affirms that in all relations the sum of pain greatly exceeds that of pleasure. The advance of civilization changes the balance only to increase the

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[1] The Philosophy of the Unconscious, II. 367, 368, III. 13; Zur Geschichte und Begründung des Pessimismus, p. 67.

overplus of pain, and improvement in material conditions is no source of happiness. Civilized peoples are more wretched than those in a state of nature; the poor, the low, and the rude are happier than the rich, the aristocratic, and the cultivated. Stupidity is a much better title to happiness than cleverness. "As the life of a fish is more enviable than that of a horse, so is the life of an oyster than that of a fish, and the life of a plant than that of an oyster, until, finally, on descending beneath the threshold of consciousness, we see individual pain entirely disappear."[1] In these facts the teleological shaping of the world is made manifest. The design of the increasing sum of misery is to educate the intelligence of men and to discipline their feeling up to the point of choosing in common the one means of escape, the cessation of conscious individual existence. This is the ideal goal. The one appropriate aspiration for the individual is "to become freed from the painful duty of assisting in the process of evolution, to plunge itself again into the Brahm like the bubble into the ocean, to be extinguished like a light in the wind."[2]

Of Von Hartmann's philosophy it is not too much to say that it is arbitrary in its starting-point and farcical in its outcome. There is no reason to believe that the unconscious has any competency for the ideation and purposive action with which it is credited. These are terms which derive their meaning from the sphere of conscious experience, and it is a perfectly arbitrary shift to exploit them in the domain of the unconscious. Moreover, as was observed, Von Hartmann portrays the unconscious as a blind power in a relation of capital impor-

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[1] The Philosophy of the Unconscious, III. 76, 77.
[2] The Religion of the Future, p. 112.

tance, inasmuch as he imputes creation to mere groundless will. And here the inept character of his teleology is brought to view. If the unconscious absolute has acted in such an irrational way once, why may it not be expected to act in a kindred way a second time? What guarantee is there that, after the race has been led by a most painful discipline to elect non-existence, the unconscious absolute will not again, by an irrational and precipitate act, inaugurate a new stage of wretched existence? If the world originated as Von Hartmann supposes, and is the stupendous piece of cosmic tomfoolery which he makes it to be, it is surely absurd to associate with it any wise design or to feel secure of any desirable outcome. Taken seriously, this pessimistic philosophy is only fitted to quench the last gleam of hope in the human spirit.

Very few disciples of either Schopenhauer or Von Hartmann have won any distinction in philosophical literature. Of the recent adherents of the latter the most prominent is A. Drews, who has given expression to his ambition to propagate the system of his philosophical master in an elaborate compendium.[1] Among the followers of Schopenhauer, Philipp Mainländer is perhaps as noteworthy as any. It is only in a partial sense, however, that he can be called a follower of that philosopher. He took exceptions to Schopenhauer's metaphysics and was by no means at one with him in ethical theory. Indeed, one gains the impression that there was little in his predecessor's system, aside from its rank pessimism, that was adapted to take captive his thinking. That element Mainländer appropriated in full measure. While making little effort to paint in detail the miseries of life,

[1] Von Hartmann's philosophisches System im Grundriss.

he gave very emphatic expression to the judgment that human life is worse than nothingness, and saw in the reduction of all things to naught the complete consummation of redemption. Like Schopenhauer, he was appreciative of the great systems of India. He differed, however, in giving a formal preference to the teaching of Christ as against both Brahmanism and Buddhism. But this is no token of real friendliness to Christianity, since Mainländer obtained a basis for his preference only by a most puerile and arbitrary exegesis wherein Christ is represented as inculcating the pessimism which identifies the redemption of the world with its annihilation.[1]

Mainländer gave undisguised expression to the atheistic standpoint. Herein he was true to the logic of pessimism. As the writings of the whole school attest, the blotting out of hope for humanity and the negation of God belong together. So long as the thought of a righteous and benevolent God survives there is ground for expecting something far better than extinction. That thought in the truly filial spirit is naturally a source of healthful and happy anticipation of an inexhaustible good.

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[1] Die Philosophie der Erlösung, pp. 262–268.

PART II
QUASI-SCIENTIFIC, THEOLOGICAL, AND ETHICAL THEORIES

CHAPTER I

THE CHALLENGING OF THE SUPERNATURAL

I.—The Different Forms of the Challenge

Whoever supposes that God, as infinite Spirit, is not merely immanent in the world, but also transcends the world, recognizes in one sense the supernatural. A supramundane Deity, in so far as he is supramundane, falls outside the category of "nature," and is properly described as a supernatural being. There is occasion, however, for a further discrimination in the use of terms. A question may be raised as to whether the transcendent Deity ever exercises his prerogative to introduce into the world factors not included in the complex of ordinary world forces, thus giving origin to events which those forces, left to themselves, would never produce. The rendering of an affirmative answer implies the occurrence of extraordinary events—extraordinary not in the sense of being necessarily fuller manifestations of wisdom and power than other events, but extraordinary simply in the sense that they are not classifiable with those stated manifestations of wisdom and power which a study of the world reveals as belonging within the compass of the regular world system. In common terminology, these extraordinary events, which are referable to a specific or exceptional as distinguished from an ordinary exercise of divine efficiency, are called miracles. Conceivably events of this kind may take place either in the physical or in the psychical domain, either in the sphere of sense-perception or in that of the inner life and character. However, the more usual association of the term "miracles" is

with the former sphere. From this point of view Dorner defines miracles as "sensuously cognizable events not comprehensible on the ground of the given system of nature as such, but essentially on the ground of God's free action alone."[1] In the following discussion the ruling conception will correspond to this definition, with the understanding, however, that the "given system of nature" need not mean anything else than the ordinary mode of divine energizing.

The challenging of the supernatural might be understood to include a denial of a transcendent Deity, as well as a denial of workings on the part of that Deity which may be classed as extraordinary, miraculous, or supernatural. It is only the latter denial, however, that will receive direct attention under the present theme, reference to the former being introduced only as dictated by the intrinsic connection between the two forms of denial.

In reviewing the various forms of the challenge to the supernatural we may properly begin with the views of the parties which have occupied our attention in the preceding pages. A general measure of the attitude of these parties toward miracles may be found in the degree to which their thinking compromised or expelled the theistic conception, though account will also need to be taken of differing aptitudes for appreciating the element of mystery in the universe.

The post-Kantian idealists certainly trespassed against the distinct conception of divine personality. At the same time they were appreciative of the mystical side of reality, and criticised the bent of the eighteenth century rationalists to make a prosaic understanding the measure of the universe. Accordingly, while they provided a defective basis for faith in miracles, they seem not to have been

[1] Dorner, System of Christian Doctrine, § 55.

animated by any pronounced spirit of antagonism to them. This was clearly the case with Hegel. His estimate of the evidential value of the supernatural sensible event was indeed quite humble. "Miracle," he says, "can produce a kind of verification for the man who is guided by his senses; but this is merely the beginning of verification, by which what is spiritual cannot be verified."[1] But, while thus rating miracles at a low figure in relation to spiritual ends, he by no means challenged their credibility. Spirit, he affirmed, is the essential miracle. Both by its weakness and its strength it is capable of working on nature. "Terror can produce death, anxiety illness, and so in all ages infinite faith and trust have enabled the lame to walk and the deaf to hear. Modern unbelief in occurrences of this kind is based on a superstitious belief in the so-called force of nature and its independence relatively to spirit."[2]

The leading representatives of the English sensational school, as holding in general a negative attitude toward religion, were, of course, inclined to render a very cold hospitality to the idea of supernatural events. It does not appear, however, that they were agreed in denying their possibility, or even the possibility of a credible attestation of them, at least for those occupying the theistic standpoint. Thus John Stuart Mill remarks: "A miracle is no contradiction to the law of cause and effect; it is a new effect, supposed to be produced by the introduction of a new cause. Of the adequacy of that cause, if present, there can be no doubt; and the only antecedent improbability which can be ascribed to the miracle is the improbability that any such cause existed. All, therefore, which Hume has made out—and this he must be considered to have made out—is that no evidence can prove

[1] Philosophy of Religion, II. 338. [2] Ibid., III. 119.

a miracle to anyone who did not previously believe in the existence of a being or beings with supernatural power; or who believes himself to have full proof that the character of the being whom he recognizes is inconsistent with his having seen fit to interfere on the occasion in question. If we do not already believe in supernatural agencies no miracle can prove to us their existence. The miracle itself, considered merely as an extraordinary fact, may be satisfactorily certified by our senses, or by testimony, but nothing can prove that it is a miracle; there is still another possible hypothesis, that of its being the result of some unknown natural cause, and this possibility cannot be so completely shut out as to leave no alternative but that of admitting the existence and intervention of a being superior to nature. Those, however, who already believe in such a being have two hypotheses to choose from, a supernatural and an unknown natural agency, and they have to judge which of the two is the more probable in the particular case. In forming this judgment an important element of the question will be the conformity of the result to the laws of the supposed agent; that is, to the character of the Deity as they conceive it."[1] Mill intimates a preference for the supposition that the Deity works only through general laws, but he offers no compelling ground for excluding the opposing supposition.

Professor Huxley, though giving sufficient tokens of a disinclination to admit the verity of reported miracles, was in substantial agreement with Mill on the lack of any decisive warrant for excluding the possibility of events which the common judgment of men would pronounce miraculous. He took exception to Hume's definition of miracle as an infraction of the laws of nature, and contended that it should rather be defined as a won-

[1] Logic, Book iii, chap. xxv, § 2.

derful event. He denied that observation of what customarily happens is a certain measure of what is possible under the rule of natural laws. "These laws, even when they express the results of a very long and uniform experience, are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held as grounds of more or less justifiable expectation."[1] Verbally, in this instance, Huxley may have excluded the wonderful event from the category of the miracle proper by identifying it with an extraordinary effect of natural laws; but he at least made room for the possibility of events as extraordinary as the sane believer in miracles would care to affirm. Moreover, in another connection he has placed himself on record as scouting the notion of a scientific veto of belief in a supernatural being to whom may reasonably be imputed a power to effect results in nature which are quite beyond the range of man's abilities. "Looking at the matter," he said, "from the most rigidly scientific point of view, the assumption that, amidst the myriads of worlds scattered through endless space, there can be no intelligence as much greater than man's as his is greater than a black beetle's, no being endowed with powers of influencing the course of nature as much greater than his as his is greater than a snail's, seems to me not merely baseless, but impertinent. Without stepping beyond the analogy of that which is known, it is easy to people the cosmos with entities, in ascending scale, until we reach something practically indistinguishable from omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience."[2] Language like this evidently amounts to an admission of the possibility of an influence on the course of nature distinctly supernatural in its mode and measure.

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[1] Hume, pp. 127–137.
[2] Essays on Some Controverted Questions, pp. 26, 27.

In the materialistic school the notion of miracles was treated with uncompromising intolerance. Büchner considered their non-occurrence so nearly axiomatic that he rated the bringing forward of formal disproof as an unjustifiable waste of time and effort.[1] With characteristic dogmatism Haeckel remarked: "We can at once set aside all mythological stories, all miracles and so-called revelations, for which it is claimed that they have come to us in some supernatural way. All such mystical teachings are irrational, inasmuch as they are confirmed by no actual experience, but, on the contrary, are irreconcilable with the known facts which have been confirmed to us by a rational investigation of nature."[2] "It is our duty and task to attack the belief in miracles, wherever we find it, in the interest of the race. . . . The struggle against superstition and ignorance is a fight for civilization. Our modern civilization will only emerge from it in triumph, and we shall only eliminate the last barbaric features from our social and political life, when the light of true knowledge has driven out the belief in miracles and the prejudices of dualism."[3] With this class of writers the absolute exclusion of miracles followed logically from their categorical denial of God and of freedom.

For positivism, as being obligated by its postulates to repudiate atheistic metaphysics as well as theistic, the agnostic attitude toward miracles was obviously the only consistent one, at least as respects the possibility of their occurrence. It was noticed, however, that Comte, while he criticised dogmatic atheism, gave some tokens of aversion to the idea of a supernatural will and of a providence higher than the plane of humanity. We may say,

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[1] Kraft und Stoff, p. 40. [2] Monism, p. 61.
[3] Wonders of Life, pp. 56, 70.

then, that the animus of the Comtean postivism was unfriendly to the basal conceptions which support faith in miracles. In the positivism of Feuerbach miracles were classed with all other religious products as mere creations of the human spirit. Imagination and feeling serve as their fertile source. Seen in clear daylight they present "absolutely nothing else than the sorcery of the imagination."[1]

An adverse attitude toward faith in the supernatural is implicit in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. The primacy which he assigns to mechanical causation, his exclusion of freedom, and his denial of all warrant for ascribing to the absolute a single attribute or function of personality, leave no intelligible ground for the occurrence of miraculous events. Moreover, in treating of the world's religions he finds in the fact that they exhibit common features, including prophecies and miracles, a ground for the conclusion that they have had in common a purely natural genesis.[2] The proper bearing of the Spencerian speculations was well illustrated by John Fiske, who at the time of writing his Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy was well intrenched in the antitheistic teaching of Spencer. In this treatise he characterizes the idea of the Infinite Person as a pseud-idea, and decries the ascription of intentions or purposes to God as an ill-considered anthropomorphism. From this standpoint miracles are, of course, excluded, since a God who entertains no purposes could have no motive to work in exceptional modes. It is not, however, by the efficacy of such considerations that Fiske looks for the extirpation of faith in miracles. That result is rather to be brought about gradually by the study of the sciences. In this way those scientific habits of thought will be engendered which will

[1] The Essence of Christianity, p. 180.

[2] Sociology, III. 33–36.

stifle theological habits of thought "as easily as clover stifles weeds."[1]

The pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann in their repudiation of the theistic conception left as little basis for the occurrence of miracles as was provided in the Spencerian evolutionism. At the same time, like the post-Kantian idealists, they were sensitive to the presence of mystery in the universe, and had no pleasure in the common rationalism. Accordingly, they were not conspicuous for zeal against supernaturalistic tenets.

Among writers less definitely associated than the foregoing with specific philosophies the typical forms of challenge to the supernatural have been conspicuously represented by Paulus, De Wette, Strauss, Renan, Matthew Arnold, Theodore Parker, and Otto Pfleiderer. Since the mythical hypothesis of Strauss was intimately associated with a noted movement in New Testament criticism, there will be occasion to give attention to that hypothesis in connection with a subsequent theme. We notice, then, at the present point only the fact that Strauss was very liberal in ascribing to the ideas at work in the minds and hearts of a people a power to objectify themselves in forms simulating a real history. On this basis he explained the stories of miracles in the Gospels, describing them as spontaneous and unpremeditated products of the lively ideas in the minds of those who felt the attractive power of the Christ.

In the exposition of Paulus (1761-1851) reports of miracles are identified with uncritical interpretations of natural events. The biblical writers, or those from whom they received their matter, did not intend to falsify his-

[1] Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy, Part iii, chaps. i and ii.

tory; they simply misinterpreted facts in accordance with the easy-going method of the time. Thus meteoric phenomena were construed as angelic appearances; the feeding of the five thousand, though brought about simply by the liberality of Christ, and of those who were inspired by his example, in distributing the food in their possession, was taken as evidence of a marvelous multiplication of loaves; the coming forth of Lazarus when he was roused from his stupor by the loud voice of Jesus was regarded as a rising from the dead; and the resuscitation of Jesus from the deep swoon into which he had fallen, in consequence of his experience of torture upon the cross, was thought to be a veritable resurrection.[1] With Paulus it was a fixed maxim, as it was with his contemporary Wegscheider, that miracles do not occur. He considered, therefore, that a principal task of the biblical historian and exegete consists in explaining them away. That he executed this task successfully has never been the verdict of any large body of scholars. Some of his explanations may have a measure of plausibility, but in attempting to apply his naturalistic exegesis to the entire list of gospel miracles he so ran into obvious artificialities as very largely to discredit his method.

The point of view of De Wette (1780-1849) was contrasted with that of Paulus in a twofold respect. On the one hand, it was less decidedly opposed to the possible occurrence of miracles; on the other hand, it was much more appreciative of the religious worth of the biblical marvels. While Paulus saw in stories of the supernatural simply accretions which needed to be cut away with the unsparing knife of criticism, De Wette saw in them the symbolical forms which serve at once to express and to satisfy the deep sentiments which pertain to man as a re-

[1] Das Leben Jesu.

ligious being. Accordingly, he was unwilling to measure their value by their historicity. A large proportion of them, especially of those recounted in the Old Testament, he considered to be unable to meet the historic test. The books with which they are incorporated approach the character of didactic poetry. A sort of epic cast pertains to the Pentateuch. "If an historical narrative," says De Wette, "written without critical investigation of facts, but treated so as to suit religious and poetical ideas, is an epic composition, then the Pentateuch may be called the theocratical epic poem of the Israelites without denying that there is an historical basis at the bottom. This epic treatment shows itself, (1) In the poetic form of the narrative, which satisfies the poetic sense, not only by its intuitiveness and spiritedness, but even by the rhythmic elevation of the style. (2) In the subject matter, and indeed in the miraculous events and the supernatural intercourse with God; for the epic loves the miraculous. The popular legend had prepared the way for this treatment."[1] Respecting the miraculous element in the New Testament, De Wette preferred to speak with much reserve.

Renan treated the subject of miracles with dogmatic intolerance. If he did not deny the possibility of their occurrence he did deny the existence of any credible evidence of their occurrence, and intimated his intention to keep up the denial until a miracle should transpire in the face of such tests as might be agreeable to his mind. Among the requirements of a proper authentication of a supernatural event, he reckoned as indispensable its being wrought under the inspection of a conclave of skeptics. This requirement, he assumed, has never been met, and so

[1] Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. by Theodore Parker, §§ 145–147.

the historian must refuse all serious consideration to reports of supernatural occurrences. "It is an absolute rule of criticism," he said, "to deny a place in history to narratives of miraculous circumstances; nor is this owing to a metaphysical system, for it is simply the dictation of observation. Such facts have never been really proved. All the pretended miracles near enough to be examined are referable to illusion or imposture. Discussion and examination are fatal to miracles. In other words, miracles only exist when people believe in them. The supernatural is but another name for faith. A miracle never takes place before an incredulous and skeptical public, the most in need of such a convincing proof. Credulity on the part of the witness is the essential condition of a miracle."[1]

In his estimate of the competency of mere ideas and feelings to generate stories of miraculous events Renan stood quite on a level with Feuerbach and Strauss. This appears conspicuously in his sketch of the origin of belief in the resurrection of Jesus. "To acknowledge," he says, "that death could have the victory over Jesus, over him who came to abolish the power of death, this was the height of absurdity. The very idea that he could suffer had previously been revolting to his disciples. They had no choice, then, between despair and heroic affirmation. A man of penetration might have announced during the Saturday that Jesus would arise. The little Christian society, on that day, worked the veritable miracle; they resuscitated Jesus in their hearts by the intense love which they bore toward him. They decided that Jesus had not died. The love of these passionately fond souls was truly stronger than death." Preëminently was this true of Mary Magdalene. "Only Mary loved enough to pass the

[1] The Apostles. pp. 37, 38.

bounds of nature and revive the shade of the perfect Master. The glory of the resurrection, then, belongs to Mary of Magdala. After Jesus it is Mary who has done most for the foundation of Christianity."[1] At this point one might reasonably ask whether the denier of miracles is not on record as asserting a stupendous miracle in the person of the Magdalene.

While Renan assigned to feeling and imagination the chief function in originating narratives of the miraculous, he was not above insinuating the existence of an element of intentional deception. He hinted that some in the company of the disciples could have told what had become of the body of Jesus had they not been unwilling to dampen a newly enkindled faith.[2] By this insinuation he placed these disciples in line with that group of the friends of Jesus whom he has represented in his *Vie de Jésus* as planning the fictitious raising of Lazarus.

In this odious insinuation against the moral integrity of the disciples Matthew Arnold took no share. "The good faith of the Bible writers," he said, "is above all question; it speaks for itself; and the very same criticism which shows the defects of their exegesis and of their demonstrations from miracles establishes their good faith."[3] Arnold also differed from Renan in the measure of his reverence for Jesus. He never could have followed the French critic in laying a soiling hand upon the historic picture of the Master. Uniformly he represented him as standing high above the heads of his reporters, "inconceivably great and wonderful." It is to be observed also that Arnold, while himself reckoning miracles an unnecessary support to religious faith, grants that the

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[1] The Apostles, pp. 57, 61. [2] Ibid., p 63.
[3] Literature and Dogma, p. 143.

mass of men have found in the conviction of their occurrence no small stimulus to faith. He considers, nevertheless, that their office must be a waning one. Belief in the historic reality of the supernatural events recorded in the Bible cannot endure the advance of the scientific temper and the light which is derived from a comparative study of the vast list of reputed miracles. "To pick Scripture miracles to pieces one by one," he said, "is an odious and repulsive task; it is also an unprofitable one, for whatever we may think of the affirmative demonstrations of them, a negative demonstration of them is, from the circumstances of the case, impossible. And yet the human mind is assuredly passing away, however slowly, from this hold of reliance also. It is what we call the time-spirit that is sapping the proof from miracles—it is the Zeit-Geist itself. Whether we attack them, or whether we defend them, does not much matter; the human mind, as its experience widens, is turning away from them. And for this reason, it sees, as its experience widens, how they arise. It sees that under certain circumstances they always do arise; and that they have not more reality in one case than in another."[1]

Theodore Parker asserted the transcendence as well as the immanence of God. He also asserted an all-inclusive divine providence. But he contended that the exercise of that providence is quite aside from miraculous makeshifts. "God, inasmuch as he is God," he said, "acts providentially in nature not by miraculous and spasmodic fits and starts, but by regular and universal laws, by constant modes of operation. . . . As the infinitely perfect, he must accomplish his providential purpose by the laws which belong to the nature and constitution of things; that is, by the normal and constant mode of operation

[1] Literature and Dogma, pp. 129, 130.

of the natural powers resident in those things themselves."[1]

Substantially the same theoretical objection as that urged by Parker may be detected in these words of Pfleiderer: "As we have recognized the order of nature as the revelation of the divine omnipotence, we cannot establish such an opposition between the one and the other as that God would be fettered or limited by the order of nature, and could now and again feel a need to break through or limit this fetter. As little as God is confined within limits by the moral order of the world, just as little is he so limited by the natural order. Both are, in fact, posited wholly and equally by his will, and are revelations of his eternal Logos—a violation of which would therefore be a self-contradiction of God, which is excluded by his eternal perfection. And as miracle contradicts the right conception of God, so does it also contradict the connection of causes and effects in conformity with law."[2]

In explaining the genesis of stories of miracles, Pfleiderer follows quite closely in the wake of Strauss. "Miraculous legends," he says, "arise in a twofold way—partly out of the idealizing of the real and partly out of the realizing of the ideal. . . . It is quite conceivable on psychological grounds that occurrences which have made a deep and lasting impression, not merely on individuals but on whole circles of religiously excited men, become involuntarily *idealized,* even on the occasion of their being perceived by the first eyewitnesses, and still more in their recollection of them. . . . Thus arise the relative miraculous histories, in which a real historical background is to

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[1] Sermons of Theism, Atheism, and Popular Theology, Works, XI. 108, 185, 189, 192.

[2] Philosophy and Development of Religion, Gifford Lectures for 1894, p. 293.

be presupposed, but which was overlaid with mystical accessories by the idealizing fantasy. . . . But the religious spirit idealizes not merely real occurrences of the external world; it also produces of its own spontaneity ideas and ideals to which nothing real in the outer world corresponds, but in which only inner living experiences of the pious soul, its struggles and triumphs, its beliefs and hopes, are brought to expression."[1]

Though denying the historic character of the reports of miracles, Pfleiderer credits them with an important religious office, and considers it out of place to treat them with unsympathetic harshness. "To the matured faith," he says, "the world itself is the one great miracle of the successive realizing of the divine ideal; and therefore such faith honors in all miracle-legends the beautiful symbol of the one great miracle of the divine government of the world and of the education of humanity, that heavenly treasure which mankind could not hide otherwise than in earthen vessels. Thus for us too the words of Goethe hold true, that 'Miracle is faith's own dearest child.' "[2]

II.—Examination of the Grounds of the Challenge

Very little consideration needs to be given to objections to miracles in so far as they proceed from an antitheistic standpoint. The theistic conception is too firmly intrenched in the history of human thought, and in the demands of man's religious, ethical, and rational life, to be exposed to any real danger of displacement. At any rate, there is nothing in the philosophies which have been reviewed that approaches to an adequate ground for its relinquishment. By the general consent of philosophers,

[1] Philosophy and Development of Religion, pp. 295–297.
[2] Ibid., pp. 297, 298.

no less than of theologians, a faulty, superficial, and inconsistent metaphysics underlies the negations of pessimism, positivism, and materialism. The Spencerian argument against the doctrine of divine personality is far from being formidable. On the one hand, as has been indicated, it rests on an arbitrary play with abstract terms, on an antithesis between "absolute" and "personal" manufactured by the assignment of a gratuitous sense to the former term. On the other hand, it runs into an excess of the anthropomorphism which Spencer affects to contemn; since it makes intelligence, self-consciousness, and will, as they are conditioned in us, the measure of all possible intelligence, self-consciousness, and will, and so excludes these high attributes from the infinite—a procedure essentially on a level with a denial of the infinite and absolute because man's experience is in the sphere of the finite and relative. As respects the Fichtean objections to divine personality, it was found that theistic faith has no serious occasion to be stumbled by them. The same answer, in fact, applies to them as to the Spencerian objections.[1]

For some minds, doubtless, a real difficulty in the way of theistic faith is involved in evolutionary science, with its disclosure of the enormous reach of the process of struggle and destruction in the past. But there is reason to conclude that the somber feature of this process has been overdrawn. Already scientific conviction has begun to admit abatements. Account has been taken of an altruistic factor in the evolutionary movement and of the affluent provision for the weal of sensitive being which is disclosed in the complex system of nature alongside of the harsher aspects. Enigmas doubtless remain; but to interpret them against the existence of a benevolent God

[1] See part i, chap. i, sect. iii.

would only serve to enlarge and to darken the element of enigma. It would be going in the face of the better and more compelling evidence. Nature is but a dim mirror compared with a rational spirit luminous with unsullied righteousness and perfect love. Even if, then, we should grant that nature's testimony fails to give full assurance, we have a mighty supplement to that testimony in the lofty intuitions of Jesus Christ, and in the firm convictions of all that vast multitude of elect spirits who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. The light that rises on the inner world furnishes a rational ground for postponing the explanation of some uncanceled shadows in the outer world.

Theistic faith, then, has not been put to hazard by the special conditions of nineteenth century thought. A little disturbance may have occurred pending the adjustment to new outlooks, but no important foundation has been displaced. The right to construe God as self-conscious person abides in undiminished force. Rather we may say, the obligation thus to construe him abides; for, in the words of Andrew Seth, "the admission of real self-consciousness in God seems demanded of us if we are not to be unfaithful to the fundamental principle of the theory of knowledge—interpretation by the highest category within our reach. The self-conscious life is that highest, and we would be false to ourselves if we denied in God what we recognize as the source of dignity and worth in ourselves."[1]

The theoretical objection to miracles urged from a theistic point of view by Theodore Parker and Pfleiderer rests on an assumption that needs a clearer and stronger vindication that it has carried at their hands. The assumption is that God would be resorting to an unworthy make-

[1] Hegelianism and Personality, p. 224.

shift in using the miracle, the proper thought of his perfection requiring that he should realize his purposes without interfering with the established order of nature which he himself has posited. In this claim there is at once a gratuitous disparagement of the miracle and a gratuitous exaltation of the order of nature. The miracle seems to be rated as a kind of afterthought, an event which is violently intruded into the divine scheme. But it is not to be thus considered. Viewed from the human standpoint, it appears, indeed, outside of the regular sequence of events. This does not imply, however, that on the divine side it is chargeable in the least degree with caprice or irregularity. On the contrary, if we give a suitable extension to the conception of law, and include under that term the fixed principles of divine action, we may affirm that the miracle is entirely conformable to law, since it occurs only in accordance with the fixed principles of the divine administration, only in accordance with the eternal plan and purpose of the all-wise Administrator. With entire propriety we may adopt the sentiment of Jean Paul Richter, *Wunder auf Erden sind Natur im Himmel;* that is, we may think of the wonderful events which, in the earthly point of view, fall outside the regular sequence, as being part and parcel of the eternal and divinely ordered scheme, the conditions of their occurrence being as unequivocally determined by divine wisdom as are the conditions of any other events whatever. Only on the ground of the insight that no valuable purpose can be accomplished by the events which men classify as extraordinary or miraculous is it legitimate to rule them out as unworthy of God. But who has such insight? Doubtless miracles, in the sense of extraordinary workings in the sphere of sense-perception, are not the highest form of the verification of spiritual truths. Nevertheless, as

means of awakening attention, interest, and confidence they may serve for men at a given stage as an efficient auxiliary to that verification. No one is qualified to deny that in the divine process of educating the race a certain ideal combination of the extraordinary with the ordinary may be adapted to reach a better result than could be attained by the ordinary alone. The conclusion, therefore, remains open that God as a practical being, having respect to the actual needs of men, may accord a certain sphere to miraculous workings. To bind him to respect impersonal nature to that extent that he will never superinduce upon it any new factor, after the analogy of man's free working, is to bind him to treat the subordinate part as the whole. Impersonal nature is only the theater on which the kingdom of righteousness is being unfolded, only the scaffolding incident to the erection of the spiritual edifice. Hence, to require God to treat it strictly as an end is no compliment to his wisdom and benevolence. Moreover, it is not to be granted that the miracle does any real despite to the system of nature. That supposition involves an imperfect apprehension of the divine infinitude. If God holds all things, so to speak, in the hollow of his hand, and his energy is the constant ground of their being and interrelations, it stands to reason that he can take care of the results of the act which, from the human viewpoint, is outside the established order. It is, indeed, well-nigh ridiculous to suppose that omnipotence cannot make special adjustments within the sphere of nature without causing a wrench to the natural system. If men, within the measure of their abilities, can manipulate the forces of the world without any disastrous result, surely it may be presumed that God can manipulate those forces on a greater scale without any real damage to the world.

Among the historical objections to miracles some writers have emphasized, as was noticed, the fact that their credibility is being excluded by the spirit of the age. The age, it is claimed, is scientific in animus, and scientific habits of thought extinguish faith in miracles as the growing clover chokes the weeds. In reply it may be said, in the first place, that the essential hostility of the age to the supposition of the miraculous has not been established by a complete historical induction. While a certain percentage of scholarly minds have been inclined to retrench or even to reject belief in supernatural occurrences, faith in a miracle-working God has remained vital in great multitudes of intelligent people. In the second place, it is legitimate to note that the habit of mind which results from certain ranges of scientific study may well include a faulty tendency. The one who immerses himself in the study of mechanically working forces, or in the investigation of the subhuman forms of life, or in the minute inspection of the physiological side of man's being, stands in some danger of an abnormally reduced appreciation for the higher altitudes and the grander facts in man's nature and religious history. Truth may be quite as much sacrificed in the ultra-prosaic as in the ultra-poetic view. A superstitious attitude may be taken toward the uniformities of nature as well as toward a power supposed to transcend nature. The animus begotten by a narrow range of scientific study may be actually unscientific before the proper standard of openness and fealty to the entire sum of facts. If so-called theologians may be tempted to overlook too largely one side of reality, so-called scientists may be tempted to make too scanty account of another side of reality. To contrast the two classes, as though the one stood for the method of mere assumption and the other for the method of complete

induction, is as rash in logic as it is objectionable in point of manners. Theology may conceivably represent quite as searching a scrutiny as does this or that compendium of inferences which has been labeled "scientific." We conclude, then, that those who have been prophesying the total extinction of faith in miracles by the advance of the scientific spirit need to give further proof of their prophetic gift before serious heed to their forecasts can be made obligatory. Of course, the spirit of the age, in so far as it is normal, must work against a heedless over-extension of the province of the supernatural; but that is a result quite different from a comprehensive negation of the supernatural.

The discrimination just made is pertinent in connection with a second historical objection, namely, that based on the wideness of the area covered by stories of miracles, or on the facility with which narratives of this order have gained a place in the annals of all peoples. This super-abundance, it is alleged, is indicative of a universal appetite for miracles, and in the force of this appetite we have a sufficient explanation of the rise and currency of stories of miracles. A measure of weight, it must be conceded, belongs to this consideration. But it is quite overrated when it is treated as a means of summarily dismissing all reports of miracles. Suppose the fact of genuine miracles, and suppose at the same time a general predilection in the various peoples of the world for tales of miraculous deeds, what would be the result? Manifestly a great crop of unauthentic marvels alongside the reports of real miracles. The presence of the latter could not abolish the ever-fruitful source of the former. The unauthentic marvels would be quite certain to appear, whatever rivals might be on the field. Their mere presence, therefore, would be no disproof of the subsistence

of truthful reports of miraculous events. As the wild growths of paganism do not enforce the conclusion that religion in general has no substantial claims, so the excessive crop of marvels does not disprove the occurrence of true miracles.

What the known fact of the facile multiplication of stories of miracles justifies is, not a sweeping denial of such events, but simply insistence upon the appropriate tests. These can fitly be made very severe. Renan was indeed asking too much when he required, as a condition of approval, that the miracle should be wrought under the inspection of a conclave of skeptics. There is no rational guarantee that divine sovereignty will wait on such a conclave and respond to its challenge. The granting of signs on demand might be attended with mischievous results. Not thus, it may warrantably be presumed, will the miracle come. If it comes at all it will appear not as a response to the challenge of unbelief, but as an harmonious incident in the fulfillment of a lofty providential vocation by the servant and representative of the divine kingdom. Still, while the dignity of the divine administration may exclude one or another form of attestation, it is right that the tests applied to the reports of miracles should be made very stringent. It is an important, if not an absolute, requirement that the supernatural events should appear to have been associated with the decisive epochs in the unfoldment of the kingdom of God in the world. It is a perfectly normal demand that they should seem to have been dictated by motives and to have subserved ends that are worthy of a God of wisdom, love, and righteousness. With entire legitimacy also it may be asked that their verity should be approved by substantial testimony.

The application of this last test to the gospel miracles

could better be made at the end of a review of the approved results of New Testament criticism than in this connection. No real trespass, however, against historical sobriety will be involved in noting here these facts: that the canonical Gospels contain excellent marks of a restrained zest for the supernatural in ascribing no miracles to John the Baptist and in imputing no marvels to Jesus prior to his public ministry; that the ancient tradition which represented Mark as founding his Gospel largely upon the testimony of Peter is thoroughly credible; that criticism very generally approves the conclusion that both Matthew and Luke, besides drawing to a considerable extent from Mark, also made use of other writings, of a comparatively early date, wherein, in all likelihood, some references to miracles were contained; and that consequently the reports of miracles in the Gospels were based largely upon apostolic testimony. The merits of apostolic testimony may doubtless be called in question; but the day is not likely to dawn soon when devout and sober minds will agree in rating as a poor set of witnesses, on the facts of a public ministry, the men whom the incomparable Master of all the ages chose for the most responsible work of the ages.

As respects all other legitimate tests, it is difficult to conceive how a judicial mind can ask for a better compliance with their demands than that exemplified by the gospel miracles. These events as a whole evince in their spirit and aim a holy benevolence, and thus fulfill a perennial office of revelation for the inspiring and strengthening of men's souls. More than this, they are woven as a congruous factor into a unique fabric, a story of marvelous beauty and spiritual wealth. They are congenially related to the personality in whom the greatest sanity, the finest balance of the higher attributes of man-

hood, was combined with the loftiest type of self-consciousness that ever came to manifestation within the limits of the human race. Now, shall marvelous deeds be counted foreign to this marvelous personality? Shall he in whom tender humanity and transcendent lordship were united and reconciled be denied a title to those exhibitions of good will and might which are contained in the gospel miracles, just because legendary or invented marvels have a place in the world? This would be nothing less than to deny the inimitable just because there are so many common products in existence. As Theodore Parker admitted, none but a Jesus could fabricate a Jesus.[1] With nearly equal propriety it may be said, nothing but the historic reality could have bequeathed that gospel picture in which the marvelous personality and the marvelous deeds are so happily adjusted to one another.

For one who occupies the Christian standpoint, who heartily believes that Jesus Christ is central to a great redemptive economy, it is not illogical to admit that supernatural workings entered into the preparation for his coming and also supplemented his finished ministry. It may be granted that the attestations for these are not equal to the evidences which certify to us the verity of the gospel miracles; it may even be admitted that a legendary growth may have gained a place within one or another part of the biblical domain; but as one contemplates in the temper of a redeemed man the transcendent importance of the economy which is centered in Christ he will find it agreeable to reason to believe that a miracle-working providence has met special demands of that economy outside of the theater of the gospel history.

Notice was taken of Renan's very easy method of dis-

[1] The Bible: What It Is and What It Is Not.

posing of the resurrection of Christ. In truth, it is much too easy to claim any considerable amount of respect. The disciples of the preëminently sane Jesus, chosen by him for a momentous task, were not, in all likelihood, the volatile enthusiasts that the sketch of the romancing critic makes them to have been. Moreover, a unique complex of mutually supporting factors is contained in the evidence for the miracle of Christ's resurrection. Briefly stated, these closely related factors are as follows: (1) The extraordinary event is perfectly consonant with the extraordinary mission ascribed to Christ by the New Testament from beginning to end. It stands forth as the appropriate consummation of his manifestation as Redeemer, being supremely adapted to support confidence in his saving office and to enkindle a salutary hope in men as respects their own heirship to immortal life. (2) The resurrection of Christ is made credible by the intimate relation subsisting between its pre-announcement and an indubitably fulfilled prophecy. All the evangelists testify that Christ foretold to the disciples, with specification of approximate date and circumstances, his violent death. Now these same historians who record this line of fulfilled prophecy associate with it a line of prophecy respecting the rising of the Son of Man from the dead. As there was fulfillment of the one line of prophesying it is reasonable to suppose that there was fulfillment of the other also. He who foresaw with such certainty that he must pass on to a tragic death may very well be regarded as having been endowed with authentic foresight when he spoke of the resurrection from the dead. (3) The victorious confidence with which the disciples took up and prosecuted the cause of their crucified Master must be referred to some adequate cause. What was it that turned the dark night of their grief and despair into a

brilliant day of joy and hope? All the causes which a skeptical fancy has conjured up seem empty and futile compared with the actual reappearance of Christ as victor over death and the grave. (4) We have from the hand of Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians testimony to a succession of appearances of the risen Christ. And this testimony comes from no mean witness. As having been formerly a special agent of the Pharisaic and priestly party in its attempt to suppress those who believed on Jesus, he must have known what that party was able to offer against the fact of the resurrection. He was on the field and had the advantage of close association with the bitter opponents as well as with the friends of the new religious movement. While he was thus furnished with substantial sources of information, he wrote within about twenty-five years of the crucifixion, and accordingly, under circumstances which advised to carefulness and sobriety in his statements; for at that time many of those to whom he referred as witnesses of the reappearance of Christ were still at hand. It must therefore be considered a weighty historical testimony which we have in these words of the apostle: "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles."[1] (5) In speaking of the burial of Christ, Paul makes an implicit reference to the empty tomb. Herein he corroborates an item witnessed to by all the New Testament writers who give any detailed account of the resurrection. A question, therefore, arises as to the ground of the disappearance

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3–7.

of the body. If the party hostile to the followers of Christ had the body in their possession they could not have neglected to produce it for the confounding of the hated sect of the Nazarene. On the other hand, to charge the disciples with having stolen and concealed the body is to make choice of an alternative that must sink under the weight of its own absurdity; for, a dead body under the hand of the disciples and a lie upon their consciences could never have fitted them to be the heroes and martyrs of a new dispensation. (6) Each of the evangelists is in agreement with Paul in teaching that the risen Christ appeared not merely to one or another individual, but to the entire company of the apostles. Mark's Gospel, it is true, does not in the extant conclusion reach to a description of the appearance, but it clearly presumes upon the fact of the appearance sketched in the appended verses. Paul mentions two visitations of Christ to the whole group of the apostles. John also mentions two visitations, though taking note that Thomas was absent from the apostolic company on the occasion of the first of these.

Such is the remarkable historical complex which stands forth as a basis for faith in the resurrection of Christ. The basis is too firm to be overthrown by some divergencies in the details of the gospel stories. That something of this sort would be found in such condensed and fragmentary accounts was antecedently probable. A criticism which has not become nearsighted and picayunish by too continuous grubbing in small details will not magnify the import of discrepancies in the subordinate particulars of brief and independent narratives.[1]

We conclude, then, that the miracle has not been ban-

[1] For a fuller elaboration of the theme see the author's System of Christian Doctrine, pp. 581–590; also C. W. Rishell, The Foundations of the Christian Faith, pp. 523–558. For an excellent monograph on the subject of the gospel miracles see A. B. Bruce, The Miraculous Element in the Gospels.

ished from the province of a rational faith. At the same time it is to be admitted that the nineteenth century challenge has not been without its result. It has undoubtedly served to promote caution in the scholarly world against giving too wide an extension to the area of the supernatural, as also against an imperfect deistic conception of the supernatural.

CHAPTER II

THE DENIAL OF THE FINALITY OF CHRISTIANITY

I.—Free Religion

In Germany congregations which made "Free Religion" their shibboleth were instituted about 1845 at Halle, Magdeburg, and Königsberg. Kindred societies soon sprang up in other places, the number being ultimately increased by the contemporary "German Catholic" movement, which was started under the leadership of Ronge and Czerski. The platform of these congregations (Freireligiöse Gemeinden) included from the start emancipation from the trammels of confessionalism, repudiation of all forms of traditional authority, the exaltation of reason as the one obligatory standard, and the approximate reduction of religion to morality. While their original principles would not necessarily exclude a certain partiality for Christianity as affording the richest content of any historic religion, it appears that, to a considerable extent at least, the congregations have come to disclaim any preference for Christianity. Recent deliverances in connection with the Berlin congregation distinctly reflect this position. Christianity is therein brought into unfavorable comparison with Buddhism. In one address this very frank statement is made: "Unquestionably the scheme of Free Religion of our time stands nearer to Buddhism in its views than to Christianity."[1] It is also made quite evident that the tenor of thinking in the Berlin congregation is distinctly antitheistic. The notion of a God who in any wise transcends the world is scouted in various

[1] Buddha und Christus, Vortrag von Professor Albert Gehrke, Nov. 27, 1904.

addresses, and these are shown to be fully representative by the definition of religion which appears in the published statement of principles. According to that definition, religion pays no respect to a supernatural being or life, and signifies only an harmonious adjustment to the world on the basis of personal truthfulness and conscientiousness.[1] Naturally a very scanty radiance illuminates the sanctuaries which are thus placarded with a veto against the existence of a personal God and of the whole realm of the supernatural. It is to be hoped, however, that in power to meet the demands of religious sentiment occasion has been afforded to improve the description which was given by Strauss in his latest book. "I have attended," he said, "several services of the free congregation in Berlin, and found them terribly dry and unedifying. I quite thirsted for an allusion to the biblical legend or the Christian calendar, in order to get at least something for the heart and the imagination, but nothing of the kind was forthcoming. After the edifice of the church has been demolished, to go and give a lecture on the bare, imperfectly leveled site is dismal to a degree that is awful."[2]

In New England the movement which issued in 1867 in the institution of the Free Religious Association enlisted at its beginning the support of a number of men who had been touched by the breath of transcendentalism, and who combined with their radical opinions a good measure of religious sensibility. Accordingly, it was here that the most noteworthy literary products of Free Religion were evolved.

A very potent factor in preparing the platform of Free Religion in New England was doubtless furnished by

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[1] Grundsätze der freireligiösen Gemeinde zu Berlin, adopted in 1877, amended in 1891. [2] The Old Faith and the New, pp. 340, 341.

the ministry of Theodore Parker between 1840 and 1860. In the earlier years of his ministry Parker, though expressing himself betimes with a freedom which shocked the great majority of his Unitarian brethren, still gave formal assent to the lofty preëminence and exceptional claims of Christianity. He spoke of it, indeed, as the "absolute religion,"[1] and depicted its transcendent and imperishable worth in these glowing terms: "That pure ideal religion which Jesus saw on the mount of his vision, and lived out in the lowly life of a Galilean peasant; which transforms his cross into an emblem of all that is holiest on earth; which makes sacred the ground he trod, and is dearest to the best of men, most true to what is truest in them, cannot pass away. Let men improve never so far in civilization, or soar never so high on the wings of religion and love, they can never outgo the flight of truth and Christianity. It will always be above them. It is as if we were to fly toward a star, which becomes larger and more bright the nearer we approach, till we enter and are absorbed in its glory."[2] In harmony with this rating of Christianity, Parker rendered to Jesus very exalted tributes. "This Galilean youth," he affirmed, "strode before the world whole thousands of years, so much of divinity was in him. His words solve the questions of this present age. In him the godlike and the human met and embraced, and a divine life was born."[3] "I look on Jesus as the highest product of the human race. I honor intellectual greatness; I bend my neck to Socrates, and Newton, and Laplace, and Hegel, and Kant, and the vast minds of our own day. But what are they all compared with this greatness of justice, greatness of

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[1] Christianity: What It Is, and What It Is Not.
[2] Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity.
[3] Ibid.

philanthropy, greatness of religion?"[1] "Here was the greatest soul of all the sons of men; one before whom the majestic mind of Grecian sages and of Hebrew seers must veil its face. His perfect obedience made him free. So complete was it that but a single will dwelt in him and God, and he could say, 'I and the Father are one.' For this reason his teaching was absolute; God's word was in him."[2] Sentences alive with the warmest appreciation for the Scriptures were also uttered by Parker. Thus he exclaimed: "How the truths of the Bible have blessed us! There is not a boy on all the hills of New England; not a girl born in the filthiest cellar which disgraces a capital in Europe, and crying to God against the barbarism of modern civilization; not a boy or girl in all Christendom through, but their lot is made better by that great book."[3]

The above citations present one side of Parker's teachings. Somewhat of a reverse side could easily be brought into evidence. Even in the earlier part of his career he proceeded as a free lance, and commented without much restraint on the limitations and on the defects of the Bible, as well as on what he considered the enormities of the traditional Christianity. From the start he greatly discounted the notion of an external authority, and was enamored of the theory that in the intuitions of the human spirit the great truths of religion have their one reliable and sufficient certificate. Man's inner nature, he claimed, bears unequivocal testimony to such fundamental truths as the existence of God, the moral law, and immortality. As J. W. Chadwick remarks: "With Parker, God, immortality, the moral law, were intuitional certainties of

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[1] Thoughts about Jesus, p. 281 in volume of Parker's "Views of Religion," edited by J. F. Clarke.
[2] Christianity: What It Is, and What It Is Not.
[3] Discourse on the Transient and the Permanent in Christianity.

irrefragable stability. It was as if he had set aside a public supernatural revelation only to substitute for it a private one in each several mind and heart."[1] By rational induction, he contended, from premises thus furnished genuine progress in religion may be achieved, whereas a scrupulous adherence to a particular set of written oracles must shackle the minds of men and restrain from a normal advance.

The radical and confident intuitionalism of Parker naturally served as a ground for diminishing stress upon any standard afforded by historical Christianity. In the end he concluded that Christianity cannot with propriety be styled the absolute religion. This conclusion is clearly stated in a biographical letter written shortly before his death. The statement runs as follows: "All the six great historic religions—the Brahmanic, Hebrew, Classic, Buddhistic, Christian, Mohammedan—profess to have come miraculously from God, not normally from man; and spite of the excellence which they contain, and the vast service the humblest of them has done, yet each of them must ere long prove a hindrance to human welfare, for it claims to be a finality, and makes the whole of human nature wait on an accident of human history—and that accident the whim of some single man. The absolute religion which belongs to man's nature, and is gradually unfolded thence, like the high achievements of art, science, literature, and politics, is only distinctly conceived of in an advanced stage of man's growth; to make its idea a fact is the highest triumph of the human race."[2] But, while thus distinctly denying the finality of Christianity, Parker still expressed his partiality and ardent esteem for the Christian religion and the Christian Scriptures. "To me

[1] Old and New Unitarian Belief, p. 24.
[2] Letter to the Members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society of Boston, Apr. 19, 1859, Works XII. 298.

the name of Christianity," he said, "is most exceeding dear, significant of so great a man and of such natural emotions, ideas, and actions as are of priceless value to mankind. . . . I take exquisite delight in the grand words of the Bible, putting it before all other sacred literature of the whole ancient world. . . . As a master the Bible were a tyrant; as a help, I have not time to tell its worth."[1]

The ultimate position of Parker on the necessity of transcending the Christian system has often been asserted by representatives of the Free Religious Association. The following may serve as typical declarations: "*Religious* is a higher and broader word than *Christian;* and so is *human.* Jewish, Brahman, Buddhist, Parsee, Mohammedan—these too are churches of the one living God, the Father of all. With advancing light thoughtful men in all of them will come out of what is peculiar and special in each, and so local and temporary, into the broad ground of universal, spiritual religion, which is piety, righteousness, humanity: that belief in God and man which is the creed of all creeds."[2] "Buddha, Pythagoras, Jesus, Luther, and the rest are children of their times: out of Greece and Judæa came Christianity; out of Christianity and Brahmanism, and Parseeism and Judaism and Islam, and all the grand currents of this century's civilization, flows the vaster wave of Universal Religion."[3] Unless all exclusiveness can be banished from the word Christian the name should be abandoned. The adherents of the religions of the East cannot be expected to surrender their faith in favor of Christianity. "They will hardly adopt a religion that degrades Confucius and Buddha into the position of blind heathen guides, unworthy of confidence,

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[1] Works, XII. 334, 335.
[2] Samuel Longfellow, Freedom and Fellowship in Religion, a Collection of Essays and Addresses, 1875, p. 91.
[3] Samuel Johnson, Ibid., p. 124.

and deifies a prophet of another race; but they will receive a religion which shall count Moses and Jesus and Confucius and Buddha, and all the greatly wise and good in the line of its prophets, giving to each the honor due for the truth he saw and told, and for the good his life achieved. Am I a visionary—a mere dreamer—if I seem to see that from all these manifest tendencies will come forth eventually another form of faith and worship, which shall not be Hinduism nor Buddhism nor Judaism nor Christianity, nor any system of faith now existing, but a broader religious development of humanity, in which all technical distinctions between these specific forms of religion shall be obliterated, and nations and races shall unite in a spiritual fellowship whose limits shall be commensurate with humanity itself? Nay, not a dreamer. I believe that I am but reading the future by the light of past history and of present social and mental forces."[1] "In the soul of Jesus the great aspiration of the Hebrew race became purified from its alloys and stamped forever with the impress of his superior spirit. But, being essentially Hebrew still, it is incapable of expansion into the aspiration of universal humanity; and Jesus, though endowed with that sanity of genius which is madness in the eyes of mediocrity, is no longer in the van. . . . The time has come to see and to say that the Christian confession is not a truth. Jesus was not the Christ of God. The Christ prophesied and longed for has never come, and will never come. The office and function is a mythical, an impossible one. No individual man has ever stood, or ever can stand, in the relation of Lord, King, and Saviour of the whole world. It would be an infinite usurpation for any man to occupy that office, either in a temporal or spiritual sense. . . . . Man

[1] W. J. Potter, Freedom and Fellowship in Religion, pp. 220, 221.

does not need to be Christianized; he does need to be humanized."[1]

Judged by these citations Free Religion appears on record as repudiating any special affiliation with Christianity. Still it is not quite true to the historic facts to say that a formal repudiation of such affiliation has taken place. In the short-lived organ named The Examiner the policy was advocated of cutting away parasitic growths from Christianity in place of taking up a position outside of the Christian system. And, though the current seems to have run rather strongly in the direction of the latter policy, the Free Religious Association in 1894 declined to award it a formal approval. A proposition in favor of "avowed independence of Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, or any other religious creed or organization that is by nature dogmatic, based on personal leadership or limited in its fellowship," was voted down. This action was a bitter disappointment to the more advanced party. F. E. Abbot, in particular, criticised it as amounting to a denial of the very principle for the advocacy of which the Free Religious Association had been founded.[2] It does not appear, however, that the Association was moved to take any steps toward an adoption of the proposition which was rejected in 1894.

II.—Theosophy and Kindred Mysticisms

In Franz von Baader (1765-1841) Theosophy had a distinguished representative in the early part of the nineteenth century. But there is little occasion to refer to his system in this connection. Like his philosophical master, Jacob Boehme, he considered Christianity to be the true

[1] F. E. Abbot, Freedom and Fellowship in Religion, pp. 245, 254, 259.
[2] Free Church Tracts, originally published in the Free Church Record.

religion, and had no thought of offering a substitute for it, or of placing it on a parity with any other historic faith. Theosophy of the type which denies the primacy of Christianity, and undertakes to supersede it with an authoritative system of its own, first claimed attention in the closing decades of the century. Its master spirit was Madame H. P. Blavatsky. In the Theosophical Society which was founded at New York in 1875 it obtained a principal instrument of advertisement and propagandism.

It accords with the worshipful attitude of this recent Theosophy toward Oriental wisdom that its representatives should give scanty consideration to the Occidental philosophies. With no one of them do they seem to have made close connection. Schopenhauer is given honorable mention by several of them[1]; but it is easy to divine that the principal reason for their reference to him is not so much their hearty appreciation of the specific contents of his philosophy as a sense of kinship with him in their estimate of Eastern philosophy and religion.

Were we to accept the claims of the Theosophists, we should need to conclude that the anxious quest after truth should no longer burden humanity, since their system has at once the character of ultimate science and of ultimate religion. "Theosophy," says Madame Blavatsky, "is divine knowledge or science," and its chief aim is "to reconcile all religions, sects, and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities. . . . The Wisdom-Religion was ever one, and being the last word of possible human knowledge was, therefore, carefully preserved. It preceded by long ages the Alexandrian Theosophists, reached the modern, and will survive every

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[1] Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, I. 55–60; H. S. Olcott, Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science, p. 15; J. D. Buck, The Nature and Aim of Theosophy, p. 15.

other religion and philosophy."[1] "Our work is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the ancient universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the absolute in science and theology."[2] "Theosophy," says W. Q. Judge, "is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child. . . . Embracing both the scientific and the religious, Theosophy is a scientific religion and a religious science."[3]

While asserting superiority to the historic religions as commonly understood, Theosophy, or the Wisdom-Religion, assumes to be identical with those religions viewed as to their inner essence, or taken in that esoteric character in which they have been known from the beginning to the enlightened few. From this point of view tolerance can be exercised toward Christianity as containing, back of its dogmatic formularies and ceremonies, the very core of theosophic wisdom. "True Theosophy," says a prominent exponent, "is esoteric Christianity as truly as it is esoteric Buddhism, and belongs equally to all religions, exclusively to none."[4] Another exponent speaks of occultism—meaning by this term theosophic theory and practice—as knitting together apparently divergent systems. "Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and the Egyptian theology are thus brought into one family of ideas."[5]

But, in spite of formal statements which seem to recognize Christianity as standing on a parity with other great religions of the world, it is easy to discover in theosophical

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[1] The Key to Theosophy, pp. 1, 3, 7. [2] Isis Unveiled, Preface, p. vii.
[3] The Ocean of Theosophy, p. 1.
[4] Mrs. Anne Besant, Esoteric Christianity and the Lesser Mysteries, Preface, p. x. [5] A. P. Sinnett, The Occult World, p. 6.

writings an antichristian tone, a tendency to disparage the worth and historical significance of Christianity as compared with the ancient religions of India and the far East. It is not advisable, perhaps, to emphasize the acknowledged purpose of the Theosophical Society to antagonize the work of Christian missionaries in the Orient,[1] since the society could rejoin that its design has been only to oppose an exoteric imperfect form of Christianity. Leaving aside this item, we may notice several indications of a disposition on the part of Theosophists to make secondary account of Christianity, and to award an unmistakable primacy to Oriental philosophy and religion. In the first place, they exhibit a decided inclination to borrow from Oriental stores, rather than from the stock supplied by a Christian civilization, such metaphysical, psychological, and theological terms as they have occasion to use. In the second place, as will be shown presently, they are partial to tenets which are characteristic of Oriental speculation and are foreign to catholic Christianity. Again, they suppose the living oracles or personal mediums of the higher wisdom in the present to be located principally in the East, and especially on "the high plateau of the Himavat." Once more, they distinctly affirm that the Oriental systems were the primary source of all true religion, and that Christianity has held to them a dependent relation. "What has been contemptuously termed paganism," says Madame Blavatsky, "was ancient wisdom replete with Deity; and Judaism and its offspring, Christianity, and Islamism derived whatever inspiration they contained from this ethnic parent. Pre-Vedic Brahmanism and Buddhism are the double source from which all religions sprang."[2] "Buddha," remarks

[1] Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, Preface, pp. xli, xlii.
[2] Ibid., II. 639.

Judge, "is the last of the great avatars, and in a larger circle than is Jesus of the Jews, for the teachings of the latter are the same as those of Buddha and tinctured with what Buddha had taught to those who instructed Jesus."[1] Another statement of the same writer indicates how decided is his preference for Eastern wisdom. "Real psychology," he says, "is an Oriental product today."[2] An equal disposition to face to the East is very distinctly exhibited in these words of Olcott: "We are giving to India the knowledge and advantage of many practical things relating to our lower needs and nature. In return she offers us the wisdom acquired by thought and experience on a higher plane."[3] Even Mrs. Besant, though manifesting a larger appreciation for Christianity than most of her school, gives it the characteristic of a derived product. The far East was a principal source, though Egypt also made contributions. In his youth Jesus received the elements of true wisdom from the Essene community in the southern Judæan desert. "When at the age of nineteen he went on to the Essene monastry near Mount Serbal, a monastery which was much visited by learned men traveling from Persia and India to Egypt, and where a magnificent library of occult works—many of them Indian of the Trans-Himalayan regions—had been established. From this seat of mystic learning he proceeded later to Egypt. He had been fully instructed in the secret teachings which were the real fount of life among the Essenes, and was initiated in Egypt as a disciple of that one sublime lodge from which every great religion has its founder."[4] Thus the unequivocal statements of Theosophists indicate that they claim only a secondary associa-

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[1] The Ocean of Theosophy, p. 120. [2] Ibid., p. 136.
[3] Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science, p. 27.
[4] Esoteric Christianity, p. 130.

tion with Christianity, their more direct alignment being with the Oriental systems, and especially with Brahmanism and Buddhism.

That Orientals should be gratified with the homage rendered by their Western brethren may readily be inferred. It would seem, however, that for the most part they have actually a much less vital appreciation of the wisdom which belongs to them by direct inheritance than that which warms the breasts of their Occidental advocates. Speaking to a native audience in Bombay in 1879, Mr. Olcott had occasion to remark: "Since we landed on your shores we have met hundreds of educated Hindus, Parsis, and men of other sects. Out of all these we have found few—so few that we might almost reckon them upon the fingers—who really know what Aryan, Zend, Jain, and Buddhistic philosophies teach."[1] The pundits, he discovered, were ready to applaud his flattering words, but when summoned to put on exhibition the riches of the ancient literature of India they remained provokingly quiescent.[2] On the whole, the practical faith of the Hindus in their own historic greatness must have seemed to the ardent apostle of Theosophy to have been lamentably weak. That he was led by his experience to charge himself with having cherished a highly colored illusion we have not ascertained.

In explaining their confident possession of absolute truth recent Theosophists, like the Gnostics of old, make large account of a secret tradition. This tradition, which affords the key to the mysteries of the universe, is the property of a brotherhood composed of men who, through a good improvement of the discipline of successive incarnations, have reached a specially advanced stage

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[1] Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science, pp. 71, 72.
[2] Ibid., pp. 127, 128. Compare Sinnett, The Occult World, p. 37.

of evolution. These men, variously styled Elder Brothers, Humanity's Teachers, Hierophants, Adepts, Initiates, and, in the Indian tongue, Mahatmas (that is, Great Souls), have extraordinary faculties for acquiring and communicating knowledge. Though possessing physical bodies of the ordinary type, they are not fettered by them. By means of the subtle astral body, which indeed pertains to each individual but is efficiently controlled by the adept alone, they can practically annihilate space and time in their movements, and work great marvels. "The adept," says Madame Blavatsky, "can control the sensations and alter the conditions of the physical and astral bodies of other persons not adepts; he can also govern and employ, as he chooses, the spirits of the elements."[1] It would appear also that his sources of knowledge are substantially unlimited. Not only does he have access to the correct philosophical and religious traditions which from time immemorial have been handed down in the brotherhood of which he is a member; he is also favored with direct vision of the authoritative record of truth. "All things," says our foremost oracle of Theosophy, "that ever were, that are, or that will be, having their record upon the astral light, or tablet of the universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known, or can be known."[2] Like estimates of the wonderful faculties of the adept are common in theosophical writings. "A Mahatma," says Mrs. Besant, "is the perfected flower of humanty, the ideal man, the promise of the future realized today. In him the spiritual nature is developed and works unrestrainedly through the mental and physical, so that he has become the master of all the forces in nature and can utilize them at will. Holding this position of royalty

[1] Isis Unveiled, II. 590. [2] Ibid., II. 588.

over nature, he becomes the servant of humanity, dedicating himself with perfect self-devotion to the good of mankind."[1] The power, says Judge, over space, time, mind, and matter which belongs to the great initiate exists germinally in all men. "The difference lies solely in the fact that we have in general not developed what we possess the germ of, while the Mahatma has gone through the training and experience which have caused all the unseen human powers to develop in him, and conferred gifts that look godlike to his struggling brother below."[2]

From the above it is quite evident that Theosophy, or the Wisdom-Religion, is a religion of authority, in which the prerogative of infallible guidance belongs to an invisible hierarchy, that is, to a company entirely unknown in its true character to men generally. This mystic company is active, but prefers to keep in the background, using for visible instruments in the execution of its benevolent purpose such responsive men and women as are found in the Theosophical Society. An eminent form of the gracious working of the hidden Brothers consists in the rendering of aid for the composition of theosophical writings. "There are passages," says Madame Blavatsky, "entirely dictated by them and *verbatim,* but in most cases they only inspire the ideas and leave the literary form to the writers."[3] We are invited to believe that she herself was greatly aided by inspiration from this source, and even relieved in part of the task of writing. "The assistance," says Sinnett, "she derived from the Brothers by occult agency, throughout the composition of the book, was so abundant and continuous that she is not so much the author of 'Isis' as one of a group of

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[1] Exposition of Theosophy, p. 19. [2] The Ocean of Theosophy, p. 12.
[3] The Key to Theosophy, p. 290.

collaborateurs by whom it was actually produced. . . . Quantities of actual manuscript in other handwritings than her own were produced while she slept. In the morning she would sometimes get up and find as much as thirty slips added to the manuscript she had left on her table overnight."[1] To the best of our knowledge, the portions supplied in this way have not been specified; but, as expressing the unadulterated wisdom of the Mahatmas, they ought to be subject to discovery by the higher criticism of the age.

Viewed as to its doctrinal content, recent Theosophy is essentially a reproduction of the old Brahmanical pantheism. It denies the personality of God, and in the declarations of at least some of its exponents reduces the world to an empty appearance. On these points Madame Blavatsky remarks: "We reject the idea of a personal, or extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic, God. . . . We believe in a universal divine principle, the root of all, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of being. . . . The esoteric doctrine teaches that the one infinite and unknown essence exists from all eternity, and in regular and harmonious successions is either passive or active. In the poetical phraseology of Manu these conditions are called the 'day' and the 'night' of Brahma. . . . No one creates the universe. Science would call the process evolution; the pre-Christian philosophers and Orientalists called it emanation; we, Occultists and Theosophists, see in it only the universal and eternal *reality* casting a periodical reflection of *itself* on the infinite spatial depths. This reflection which you regard as the objective material universe we consider as a temporary *illusion* and

[1] The Occult World, pp. 159, 160.

nothing else. That alone which is eternal is *real.*"[1] "As to the absolute," remarks Judge, "we can do no more than say, *It is.* None of the great teachers of the school ascribe qualities to the absolute although all qualities exist in it. Our knowledge begins with differentiation, and all manifested objects, beings, or powers are only differentiations of the Great Unknown. The most that can be said is that the absolute periodically differentiates itself, and periodically withdraws the differentiated into itself."[2]

In accordance with these pantheistic postulates man is represented as being identical in the highest part of his being with the absolute essence. His constitution, however, in the view of the Theosophist, is decidedly complex. He is, in fact, a sevenfold entity. Taken in ascending order the constituents which make up his being are (1) body, (2) vitality, (3) astral body, (4) animal soul, (5) human soul, (6) spiritual soul, (7) spirit or Atma.[3] The first four of these are dissoluble. On the disintegration of the physical body the departed one finds a corporeal vehicle in the astral body, which consists of matter of very fine texture, electrical and magnetic in its essence. But this form of embodiment is also temporary. The astral body perishes, its dissolution taking place in seven successive stages, as though it consists of seven concentric shells. When the purgatorial process has been completed, and all that belongs to the sphere of mortality has been cast off, the individual enters devachan, or heaven, where he remains for a period proportioned to his merits. On the expiration of this period he becomes a subject for reincarnation. And so

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[1] The Key to Theosophy, pp. 61, 63, 84; Isis Unveiled, II. 264
[2] The Ocean of Theosophy, pp. 14, 15.
[3] Judge, The Ocean of Theosophy, p. 31.

"the ever-whirling wheel" carries him on, through the long series of births and deaths, until he reaches nirvana, or the state which ensues when the differentiated is merged in the one infinite essence. In the prominence given to this notion of reincarnation, as in its acosmistic pantheism, Theosophy appears as a copy of Hindu thinking. It may be noticed, however, that the Occidental Theosophist is inclined to rebel against the idea of incarnation in animal forms, and to accept the maxim, "Once a man always a man."[1]

In relation to modern spiritism, or so-called "Spiritualism," the type of Theosophy which is here reviewed adopts a disparaging tone. It admits in large part the reality of spiritualistic phenomena, but denies that they are to be explained as the products of the agency of spirits. The real causes are the astral body of the medium which, as being detached, appears as the so-called spirit, or the astral shell of a deceased person, or possibly a picture reflected on an invisible mass of electrical and magnetic matter. Mediumship is unhealthy, since the medium, for the exercise of his office, must be in a passive state, and thus exposed to the working of misleading and pernicious influences. Judged, too, by the character of the messages which are communicated through mediums, their office must be rated at a very humble figure. In truth, the emptiness and contradictory character of the messages discredit the claims of Spiritualism to be a valid instrument of revelation.[2] That deceiving messages, as well as enlightening, may come from the

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[1] Judge, The Ocean of Theosophy, p. 67.

[2] Blavatsky, The Key to Theosophy, pp. 27, 28; Isis Unveiled, I. 70, 490, II. 588; Besant, Exposition of Theosophy, p. 23; The Ancient Wisdom, p. 95; Judge, The Ocean of Theosophy, pp. 43, 44, 149–153; Olcott, Theosophy, Religion, and Occult Science, pp. 252, 253; George Wyld, Theosophy or Spiritual Dynamics, second edition, pp. 10–12, 30.

spirit world has sometimes been admitted by Spiritualists themselves.[1]

Doubtless, as representing a predilection for the mystic or occult, Spiritualism has a certain bond of association with Theosophy. This was recognized by Madame Blavatsky[2]; nevertheless, in common with her associates, she passed ultimately a very disparaging verdict upon mediumistic performances.

References to "Christian Science," so called, rarely occur in theosophical writings. This may be explained in part by the fact that the prophet of the new medico-religious dispensation had not secured a large amount of public attention at the time when the theosophical movement was started, the scriptures of that dispensation, as embodied in Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy's Science and Health, being first issued in 1875, the year which marked the organization of the Theosophical Society. On the score of its contents Mrs. Eddy's teaching might properly have elicited rather frequent remark from such admirers of Oriental pantheism as the Theosophists have been for the most part. Her system, however, stands in contrast with theirs on various points. In the first place, the former gives to the transcendent powers which are assumed to be available for man's use a much closer association with the healing of disease than is affirmed by the latter. In the second place, Mrs. Eddy differs from the more prominent representatives of Theosophy in her formal attitude toward the Christian oracles. While she finds in the Bible whatever, in the application of her peculiar exegesis, she chooses to put into it, she claims that it was the only text-book which served to introduce

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[1] Robert Dale Owen, Address in Boston, May 30, 1867.
[2] The Key to Theosophy, p. 196.

her into the great truths of her system.[1] Again, she differs from the more prominent representatives of Theosophy in forbearing to antagonize the thought of divine personality. Indeed, she admits that God is "infinite Person,"[2] though this is not a point to which she awards special emphasis. Once more, the Christian Science scheme of Mrs. Eddy is contrasted with the scheme of the Theosophists in that the former is comparatively void of references to the future life, while in the latter the theme of eschatology commands a position of overshadowing importance.

On the side of resemblance Christian Science, as expounded by Mrs. Eddy, agrees with Theosophy in claiming to be a perfectly authoritative system, lying in the whole sum of its teachings beyond any possible improvement. Madame Blavatsky never spoke with a tone of more absolute confidence than that which pervades every utterance of the author of Science and Health. Indeed, the claim of the former to be on good terms with the Mahatmas, and thus to be in condition to give out portions of that higher wisdom which has ever been the possession of the elect spirits of the race, falls noticeably below the position arrogated by the latter. No mystic brotherhood stands in the background to share with Mrs. Eddy the honor of being the oracle of absolute truth. God alone prepared her "for the reception of a final revelation of the absolute principle of scientific being and healing." Common mundane factors were out of the field. "No human pen or tongue," she says, "taught me the science contained in this book, Science and Health; and neither tongue nor pen can overthrow it." It is imperishable because it is the unadulterated truth. "Between Christian Science and all forms of superstition a

[1] Science and Health, 1902, pp. 110, 126.

[2] Ibid., p. 116.

great gulf is fixed, as impassable as that between Dives and Lazarus. . . . Science is immortal and coördinate neither with the premises nor with the conclusions of mortal beliefs." And the authentic compendium of Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy is careful to affirm, is to be found precisely in her writings. "A Christian Scientist requires my work, Science and Health, for his textbook, and so do all his students and patients. Why? Because it is the voice of truth to this age, and contains the whole of Christian Science, or the science of healing through mind. Its thorough perusal serves as a means or occasion of restoring the sick."[1]

Again, Christian Science resembles the later Theosophy, as has been intimated, in its distinct kinship with Brahmanical pantheism. This feature has been noted by a theosophical writer.[2] As is well known, Brahmanical pantheism is of the acosmistic or world-denying type. It admits of only one reality, the absolute Spirit or Self. The world—all that passes under the name of matter—is empty appearance, illusion pure and simple. Now, this is the cardinal doctrine of Mrs. Eddy, the tenet which is reiterated with tireless persistence. She falls not a whit below Sankara or any other representative of Brahmanical pantheism in stress on the unity of substantial being, or on the sole ontological reality of the one infinite Spirit. Statements like these proceed from her pen: "God is the only Spirit. . . . Christian Science reveals incontrovertibly that mind is all-in-all, that the only realities are the divine mind and idea. . . . God is the only intelligence of the universe, including man. . . . Spirit is infinite. There is but one Spirit, because there can be

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[1] Science and Health, 1902, pp. 83, 84, 107, 110, 202, 446, 456.
[2] Short Lessons in Theosophy, compiled by Miss S. C. Clark from the teachings of W. J. Colville, pp. 9, 10.

but one Infinite. . . . Soul or Spirit signifies Deity, and nothing else. There is no finite soul or spirit. Those terms mean only one mind, and cannot be rendered in the plural. . . . This belief that there is more than one mind, is as pernicious to divine theology as are ancient mythology and pagan idolatry."[1] With equal definiteness the associated doctrine of the nothingness of matter is asserted. "Matter will finally be proven to be nothing but a mortal belief. . . . Matter and death are but mortal illusions."[2] Disease, of course, shares the unreality of matter. "Every sort of sickness is a degree of insanity; that is, sickness is always hallucination."[3] In addition to these two points of close affiliation with Brahmanical pantheism a third may be mentioned. Brahmanism in its soteriological theory emphasizes the value of a special kind of knowledge. The illusion of a multifold world and all the evil entailed thereby, as it teaches, can be remedied only by the knowledge of the identity of the individual with the absolute self. Similarly, Mrs. Eddy puts a premium on the efficacy of a special kind of knowledge. While will is not denied by her to the one infinite Spirit, it is treated in its human character as a subject for mere disparagement, and the stress is put upon the mental contemplation and grasp of the principles of the science which finds through herself its authoritative expression. "Will-power," she says, "is not science, and its use is to be condemned. . . . Human will is an animal propensity, not a faculty of soul. Hence it cannot govern man aright."[4]

Along with these points of intimate correspondence to Brahmanical pantheism Mrs. Eddy's teaching exhibits, no doubt, a measure of unlikeness. For instance, she

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[1] Science and Health, 1902, pp. 73, 109, 330, 334, 466, 469.
[2] Ibid., pp. 125, 289. [3] Ibid., pp. 407, 408. [4] Ibid., pp. 145, 490.

seems not to have been quite in line with that system in her conception of the relation of man to the one Mind or Spirit. Instead of predicating identity between the two, she prefers to represent man as holding to the one Spirit the relation of an idea in which that Spirit eternally comes to expression.[1] But whatever differences may be specified are quite overbalanced by the pronounced agreements. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Mrs. Eddy has incorporated into the foundations of her system the characteristic teachings of Brahmanical pantheism. Her formal attitude toward pantheism is doubtless hostile; but that results from the association which, in her narrow use of the term, she makes between pantheism and materialism.

Christian Science in its practical code pays a just tribute to ethics, emphasizing in particular the worth of unselfish love. But when examined as to its ability to provide a logical and consistent basis for ethical theory it appears decidedly open to criticism. It is difficult to see how man, under Mrs. Eddy's definition of his relation to the one Spirit, can have the autonomy needed for real moral agency. Then, too, it is not apparent how he can be a subject for responsibility, merit, or blame, so long as sin is made an illusion of mortal mind, which, as being itself unreal,[2] cannot be supposed to harbor the least approach to reality. That sin is an illusion of this sort is very distinctly asserted. "Whatever indicates the fall of man," says Mrs. Eddy, "or the opposite of God, or God's absence, is a mortal belief. . . . Matter and its belief—sin, sickness, and death—are states of mortal mind which act, react, and then come to a stop. They are not ideas, but illusions. . . . Man is incapable of sin,

[1] Science and Health, pp. 303 470, 475.
[2] Ibid., p. 114.

sickness, and death, inasmuch as he derives his essence from God, and possesses not a single original or underived power. Hence the real man cannot depart from holiness; nor can God, by whom man was evolved, engender the capacity or freedom to sin."[1] "Thus the long tragedy which sin is supposed to have enacted in the world turns out to have been only a deceptive dream."[2]

III.—Secularism and Ethical Culture

The French writer Guyau, in his Non-Religion of the Future,[3] figures as a prophet of Secularism, though he seems neither to have appropriated the term nor to have written as the exponent of any organized secularist movement.

In predicting the disappearance of religion Guyau does not ignore the powerful dominion which it has exercised over the human race in the past and its substantial universality. In accord with recent anthropological investigation, he says: "After the labors of Herr Roskoff, M. Réville, and M. Girard de Rialle, it is impossible to maintain that there exist nowadays on the surface of the earth whole peoples absolutely without religion or superstition, which among noncivilized people amount to the same thing."[4] But this fact, that religion appears to be rooted in human nature, does not argue, in the opinion of Guyau, its permanence, since human nature itself, instead of being unchanging, falls under a law of evolution. "To show," he says, "the deep roots that religion has sent down into the depths of the

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[1] Science and Health, pp. 282, 283, 457, 476.
[2] For a succinct estimate of Christian Science see G. T. Ladd, Philosophy of Religion, I. 167.
[3] L'Irreligion de l'Avenir. The citations are from the English translation.
[4] Ibid., p. 22.

human mind, is not to demonstrate the perpetuity of religion, for the human mind itself is incessantly changing. . . . The eighteenth century hated religion and wished to destroy it. The nineteenth century endeavors to understand religion and cannot reconcile itself to seeing so charming an object of study disappear. The historian's device is, 'What has been, will be'; he is naturally inclined to model his conception of the future on his knowledge of the past. A witness of the futility of revolutions, he sometimes forgets that complete evolution is possible: an evolution which transforms things to their very roots and metamorphoses human beings and their beliefs to an extent that renders them unrecognizable."[1]

As specific causes of the ultimate elimination of religion Guyau makes account of the progressive overthrow of the beliefs and customs on which religion depends and of the dissolving agency of private judgment. "The elements," he remarks, "which distinguish religion from metaphysics and from ethics, and which constitute a positive religion, properly so called, are, in our judgment, essentially caducous and transitory, and, if so, we reject the religion of the future as we should reject an alchemy of the future, or an astrology of the future. . . . The reign of sensibility over intelligence is not perpetual; sooner or later the positions of the two must be reversed. . . . The perpetuity of religious sentiment depends upon its legitimacy. Born, as it is, of certain beliefs and customs, its fate is one with theirs. . . . There exists in the bosom of every great religion a dissolving force, namely, the very force which served in the beginning to constitute it and to enable it to triumph over its predecessor: the right of private judgment. It is upon this force, this right, that one may count for the ultimate establishment,

[1] L'Irreligion de l'Avenir, pp. 15–17.

after the gradual decomposition of every system of dogmatic belief, of a final absence of religion."[1]

What is to take the place of the vanquished religion? According to Guyau, philosophy, free individualistic speculation in the domains of metaphysics and ethics—a speculation that will be all the more energetic because religion will be out of the way. "Human beliefs," says our author, "when they shall have taken their final form in the future, will bear no mark of dogmatic and ritualistic religion, they will be simply philosophical."[2] "The day when positive religion shall have disappeared, the spirit of curiosity in matters of cosmology and metaphysics, which has been more or less paralyzed by an effort to dwell within the unyielding limits of indomitable formulas, will be more vivacious than ever before. There will be less of faith but more of free speculation, less of contemplation but more of reasoning, of hardy induction, of an active outleap of thought."[3] "Metaphysical speculations will tend to become, like the highest æsthetic products, a luxury; they will be sought for their own sakes, and for the general elevation of mind that they bestow, rather than for guidance in particular matters of conduct. The destiny of the world will interest us quite apart from any question of our own destiny, and our voyages into the unknown will be prompted not by selfishness but by disinterested curiosity."[4]

Though proclaiming so emphatically the destined disappearance of religion, Guyau makes place for a sort of religion in the line of admiration for the cosmos and of devotion to social ideals. He says: "To be non-religious is not to be anti-religious. More than that, the non-religion of the future may well preserve all that is pure in

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[1] L'Irreligion de l'Avenir, pp. 10, 12, 230, 231. [2] Ibid., p. 364.
[3] Ibid., p. 13. [4] Ibid., p. 427.

the religious sentiment: an admiration for the cosmos and for the infinite powers which are there displayed; a search for an ideal not only individual, but social, and even cosmic, which shall overpass the limits of actual reality. . . . Non-religion, as we here understand it, may be considered as a higher degree simply of religion and of civilization."[1]

In England Secularism assumed in the latter part of the nineteenth century an organized form. Here George Jacob Holyoake served as the prime mover. As represented by him, Secularism, while not formally atheistic, is practically so. On the one hand, he says, "I never shared that notion of atheism so positive and dogmatic as to declare that no other hypothesis of the universe is possible to be entertained. The ideas of the infinite and universal can never be, or at least have never been, so sharply defined and permanently conceived as to warrant us in declaring theism, under any form, to be impossible."[2] On the other hand, he makes this statement: "I recognize in nature but the aggregation of matter. . . . I can conceive of nothing beyond nature, distinct from it and above it. The language invented by Pope, to the effect that 'we look through nature up to nature's God,' has no significance for me, as I know nothing besides nature and can conceive of nothing greater."[3]

The supreme end contemplated in Secularism is earthly good, and for the reaching of this end it makes large account of material means. "It seeks," writes Holyoake, "to supply the material and social conditions under which whatever of good exists in human nature may manifest itself unchecked. It would place the intellect under the

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[1] L'Irreligion de l'Avenir, pp. 10, 11.
[2] The Trial of Theism, p. 146.
[3] Ibid., p. 200.

dominion of true ideas, and show to others that virtue is an advantage as well as a duty. . . . Secularism teaches the good of this life to be a rightful object of primary pursuit, inculcates the practical sufficiency of natural morality apart from atheism, theism, or the Bible, and selects as its method of procedure the promotion of human improvement by material means."[1]

In admitting the propriety of a sense of awe before the cosmos, Holyoake made room for a quasi-religious sentiment. A more recent expositor of Secularism seems to entertain very scanty tolerance even for this much of approach to religion. The movement in progress in the industrial and scientific world involves, according to J. M. Bonham, "the ultimate dissipation of all worshipful feeling." In the conflict which is going on between idealism and a crass realism the issue is not at all doubtful. "This contest involves the constant challenge of sacred idealism and sacred authority, and nothing in it warrants the belief that it will cease so long as any sacred authority and any reverence for ideals remains."[2] In harmony with this point of view, Bonham takes exception to the conclusion of Leslie Stephen, that the religious instincts of mankind will survive and demand some form of expression. They will be attenuated, he holds, to the point of practical extinction.[3] A religionless race sitting on the ash heap of an utterly prosaic realism—such is the engaging picture which this writer manufactures from his secularist postulates.

Secularism would not seem to be a very promising subject for a ritual. Nevertheless it has exercised its talent in that direction, having devised formularies for

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[1] The Trial of Theism, pp. 221, 222.
[2] Secularism, its Progress and its Morals, pp. 360, 362, 363.
[3] Ibid., pp. 148–155.

the naming of infants, for marriage, and for burial, in all of which it has not disdained to utilize suggestions from the Anglican models. Guyau has taken notice of this borrowing and has characterized it in this rather caustic fashion: "Secularism is a purely atheistic and utilitarian religion, which has borrowed all it could from the ritual of the English Church. This contradiction between the outer form and the inner void resulted in a positive parody."[1]

In passing from Secularism to the "Ethical Culture" movement we enter a much warmer atmosphere as respects appreciation of the worth of religion. This movement was initiated in the eighth decade of the century under the leadership of Felix Adler. From New York, where the first Ethical Society was founded, the movement spread in various directions. Kindred societies were established in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Saint Louis; also in London, in various cities of the German empire, in Vienna, in Buda-Pesth, and in Venice. Furthermore, independent societies, differing in some measure from those which received the initial incentive from Felix Adler, have arisen in London and Cambridge.

A general aim rather than a precise platform binds the Ethical Societies together. "No one man," says an exponent, "is authorized to speak for the Ethical Movement beyond giving his personal opinions and convictions concerning it. The attitude of one group of men might meet with disapproval from another group. Yet it should be said that a few years ago the societies in America, which have grown out of the parent organization in New York city, formed an Ethical Union in this

[1] The Non-Religion of the Future, p. 365. Compare C. M. Davies, Heterodox London, II. 185.

country, with the following statement as a section of the constitution: 'The general aim of the Ethical Movement as represented by this Union is to elevate the moral life of its members and that of the community; and it cordially welcomes to its fellowship all persons who sympathize with this aim, whatever may be their theological or philosophical opinions.' "[1] The purpose of the movement is further defined in this comparative view from the pen of Stanton Coit: "An Ethical Society," he says, "differs from Christian Churches in being broader in its fellowship. It excludes no one because of skepticism as to the existence and personality of God or the divinity of Christ. But, on the other hand, let it be distinctly known that we are not as a society agnostic. We do not deny the possibility of knowing the existence of God. . . . As a society we are not pledged to any theory of the origin of the universe, or of conscience itself, or to any theory as to the limits of human knowledge. . . . But, though thus different from all Christian Churches, it does not follow that we approach any nearer to non-Christian religious organizations that have recently sprung up than we do to the Christian Churches. We are quite as distinct from positivism, secularism, and socialism."[2]

In emphasizing the sufficiency of morality the adherents of the Ethical Movement take a high view of what is meant by morality, a view akin to that of Kant and Fichte, in which the moral law is invested with supereminent sanctions, so that it may be accounted the most august and indisputable thing in the universe. Morality in this sense, it is claimed, includes the very core of religion. It coincides with religion in emphasizing man's

[1] W. L. Sheldon, An Ethical Movement, 1896, p. xiii.
[2] Ethics and Religion, a Collection of Essays, pp. 287–290.

relationship to the universal and absolute, and, while it cannot subscribe to the dogmas of religion taken in their literal sense, it can tolerate them as symbolical expressions of great truths. These are points of view which find recurring expression in the words of the spokesmen of the Ethical Movement. Thus Adler says: "The authority of conscience is founded on human nature itself. The imperative which we cannot disown comes from within. The distinction between the right and the wrong is as aboriginal as that between the true and the false."[1] "Religion is that which brings man into touch with the infinite: this is its mission. If we put aside the materialistic explanations of morality, and see the majesty, the inexplicable augustness of it, we shall find that, in the moral life itself, in the moral experience itself, we possess religion. Religion is at the core of it, for religion is the connection of man's life with the absolute, and the moral law is an absolute law."[2] "All that is best and grandest in dogma is due to the inspiration of the moral law in man. The time will come when the tenets of faith will no longer be narrowly understood as now; and while their influence will still be great, they will cease to be harmful and confining, they will be used as rare imagery to deck the sublime meanings which they symbolize; not as vessels that contain the absolute truth, but as choice and beautiful vases, fit to hold the ever-fresh and ever-blooming flowers of the ideal."[3] To the same effect William Salter remarks: "A higher is unfolded to us in the very nature of morality: it is given to us in our very constitution as rational beings. . . . We cannot go beyond the law of right; God is not more ultimate; human reason is but

[1] Life and Destiny, p. 78.
[2] The Religion of Duty, p. 94.
[3] Creed and Deed, p. 60.

that in us which perceives it."[1] "The moral nature is that by which we transcend ourselves and enter into an ideal region."[2] "Ethics is a pure concern of man with man, it is often said; it is religion that binds us to the higher order of things. Yet ethics is nothing but the response which man and man make to the higher order of things; for the reason of justice is, not that another wants it and I choose to give it, but that he ought to have it and I ought to give it. The duty is absolute, not conditioned on our will or thought, but given to us in and by the nature of things. Ethics realized in its meaning is religion."[3] In a similar strain a prominent representative of the Ethical Movement in Germany, G. von Gizycki, says: "Our moral duties do not bind by contract, but are unconditional. . . . The divine dwells in us, and everything great, good, and holy in the idea of God arises out of our own heart; moral consciousness is the spring of all that has value in religion."[4]

On the question of divine personality the exponents of the movement under review are disinclined for the most part either to negation or to affirmation. Salter has, indeed, characterized the thought of a personal Deity as an illusion.[5] Most of his school, however, seem to have taken a position of greater reserve. The points maintained by all are the existence of an infinite and ultimate power which makes for righteousness and the location of the one great proof of the reality of such a power in man's moral constitution. The following statement of Adler is quite representative: "I believe that there is a higher Being, an ultimate, divine Reality in things. In the attempt to describe this Being language faints, im-

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[1] Ethical Religion, pp. 65, 70. [2] Ibid., p. 7. [3] Ibid., p. 18.
[4] Ethics and Religion, a Collection of Essays, pp. 172, 195.
[5] Ethical Religion, pp. 12, 39

agination grows dizzy, thought is paralyzed. On moral grounds, and in the last analysis on moral grounds only, I assume the existence of such a Being. All I can say by way of description is, that there really exists that which corresponds to the moral ideal, that there is a Power back of the effort toward righteousness, which gives effect to it beyond our finite power."[1]

Though questioning the possibility of the impersonation of the complete moral ideal in a single individual, the representative writers of the Ethical Societies speak of Jesus in terms of tender respect, and accord to him a certain primacy among all who have taught and wrought in human history. Scanty justice, says Adler, is done to the greatest of the Hebrew prophets when he is described as simply a "moralist," for that term does not properly call attention to "his depth, his spiritual wealth, his real greatness, to the 'virtue that went out from him.' "[2] Referring to the need of giving a central place to the theme of "the kingdom of God," Salter remarks: "In this sense we are still on the foundation of the prophets, Jesus himself being the corner stone."[3] The ideal of self-denial, says W. L. Sheldon, was manifested in marvelous beauty and completeness in Jesus. "In the picture of the human Christ we see an absolute self-surrender. Jesus was humility itself. I watch the suffering Christ on the cross after all the agony he had undergone, without one thought about himself, anxious only to achieve the purpose to which he had consecrated his life and to show the human race the true way of conquering evil. And I say to myself, what wonder that men have clung to the crucifix! This human Jesus did conquer evil; he showed mankind how to subdue the wild, erratic,

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[1] The Religion of Duty, pp. 39, 40. [2] Ibid., p. 77.
[3] Ethical Religion, p. 199.

self-asserting spirit which exists in every one of us. He hung there upon the cross a conqueror."[1]

While those who make "ethical culture" their shibboleth do not take the Bible as an authority to which they are in any wise bound to submit, they are free to acknowledge and to laud the wealth of its contents. "Purity of diction," writes Adler, "power of striking antithesis, simple yet sublime imagery, a marvelous facility in the expression of complex states of feeling, and those the deepest of which the human soul is capable, are but a few of the obvious features that distinguish the golden age of Hebrew literature. Never, perhaps, has the symbolism of nature been used with such supreme effect to express the unspeakable emotions that are deep down in the heart of man. Such music as that which swells through the pages of Isaiah's prophecies cannot be forgotten; such ringing rhythmic periods, in which the eloquence of conviction bursts forth into the rounded fulness of perfect oratory, can never fail to touch and inspire."[2] "The Bible," says Salter, "glows with the idea of righteousness as no other book does that has become the property of the Western world, and to those who have the wit to distinguish substance from form it is still, and may always be, a means of moral inspiration."[3] In his suggestive book, An Ethical Sunday School, W. L. Sheldon provides for a large use of the Bible. Referring to the needs of the younger pupils, he makes this very significant remark: "I have been reluctant to employ series of tales from other literatures, as, for instance, from Homer, or the fairy tales from German sources, or even the beautiful legends concerning King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table—partly for the reason that

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[1] An Ethical Movement, p. 117.
[2] Creed and Deed, p. 222.
[3] Ethical Religion, p. 255.

they would tend to *run together* in the minds of the little ones with the stories from the Bible. As a matter of fact, the Bible tales, on the whole, are so much superior in their moral import to the legends in other classic literature that it has seemed better to let the Scripture tales stand out boldly by themselves in the minds of the young."[1]

IV.—A Word on the Superior Claims of Christianity

The types of thought which have been considered may be regarded as embracing successively these four propositions: (1) The highest attainable religion is not to be identified with Christianity, but rather is to be compounded from the best religious products that can be discovered anywhere in the world. (2) To assert a distinct primacy for Christianity is quite illegitimate; indeed, that honor may with better right be awarded to the great religions of the East. (3) Religion expresses no permanent need of human nature, and is destined to be outgrown. (4) Morality at its best takes up all that is of value in religion, so that the specifically religious may properly cease to be a matter of any emphasis. These propositions constitute the more significant contentions of Free Religion, Theosophy, Secularism, and the Ethical Movement, respectively.

The second proposition, it is true, does not fully cover the peculiarities of the theosophical scheme. In that scheme the doctrine of adepts, the doctrine that religion in its perfect form has been the property of highly developed and illuminated men, and has been handed down by them in its completeness and purity through all the ages, holds an important place. But it is impossible to

[1] Ethical Religion, p. 39.

treat seriously a doctrine like this which throws contempt on the researches of the most distinguished anthropologists and students of comparative religion. Nothing but an intemperate appetite for the queer can secure a moment's hospitality for the Mahatma vagary. Even if the existence of beings so wonderfully gifted, and so wonderfully indisposed to make any fruitful employment of their gifts, could be credited, there is not a scrap of satisfactory evidence of any real connection with them. Madame Blavatsky, certainly, has furnished no convincing proof of such connection. For years after her reputed novitiate in Thibet she figured as a common spiritualistic practitioner. Either, then, she had not learned that Spiritualism was unacceptable to the hidden sages, or she knowingly chose a false and condemned path. The conclusion is scarcely to be avoided that the effective demand for exchanging Spiritualism for Theosophy lay in the ambition of the restless devotee of occultism to figure in a more imposing rôle. The supposition of communication with superior sources of illumination is adapted to elicit from sober-minded people only the smile of incredulity.[1]

Turning now to the first of the propositions named, we notice that there is very little promise of vitality in a religion formed simply by the process of compounding selected teachings. As the nutritive elements of the soil cannot be made to minister to life and movement by being merely brought together, and can fulfill that function only when taken up by a living organism already present, so religious truths cannot be combined into a living whole by a mere process of juxtaposition. A living

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[1] Compare Arthur Lillie, Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophy; Edmund Garrett, Isis Very Much Unveiled, Being the Story of the Great Mahatma Hoax.

religion, sufficiently comprehensive in its fundamental principles, can be hospitable toward truths found anywhere in the limits of the accessible universe; but the simple compiling of the truths will not make a religion endowed with victorious energy.

The comparative inefficiency of a compiled religion has received a measure of historical illustration. In the era of the French Revolution the so-called Theophilanthropists undertook to make a new religion by the process of selecting good maxims from all available sources. The result was a collection of very eligible teachings. But was there any power of conquest or satisfying efficacy in the religion thus formed? The very scantiest amount. In fact, propagation of the eclectic faith went on so poorly that one of its leading representatives is said to have asked Talleyrand what he should do to win the merited success. The subtle diplomatist replied, "I should advise you to get yourself crucified, and to rise from the dead on the third day."

The trouble with a religion made by the intellectual method of searching out and assorting acceptable teachings is its vague, abstract, and distant character. The hungry heart of humanity craves something more than worthy ideas respecting the divine. It requires that the thought of God should be supplemented by practical attestations that he is not merely a beautiful ideal, but a God who is with the race and for the race, a Being who has disclosed great and benevolent purposes and given assurance of their certain fulfillment. In other words, no religion is qualified to meet the actual demand which does not take on the forms of a sacred history. A superlatively rich and well-authenticated sacred history must in the very nature of the case arm a religion with incomparable efficiency for the task of capturing and molding

the minds and hearts of men. It is seen, then, to be worthy of an infinitely wise and benevolent providence to adopt this potent expedient, this method of historic attestation in working out the proper religious destiny of mankind. The rational demand harmonizes with the claim of Christianity to have won its place in the world in and through a sacred history which brings into effective contact with men the highest and best that is conceivable.

That Christianity in its historic form embraces everything that is capable of finding a place in an ideal system need not necessarily be assumed; for Christianity rightly understood is not a completely finished fact. In its fundamental principles it is indeed unchanging. Here the ideal is at the same time the real. But in drawing out the logical inferences from these principles, and in securing for them a practical realization through all the complex life of human society, there is abundant opportunity for a progressive movement. In this movement the fruits of universal experience can be appropriated without the slightest incongruity. The divine sufficiency of Christianity is not denied but rather illustrated by its capacity to assimilate whatever of good is contained within the horizon of human achievement. Only the soundness of its central principles could enable it to possess in full measure this capacity. There is, accordingly, the very slightest need to think of parting company with Christianity for the sake of adding to one's store of religious riches. The hesitation of the Free Religious Association to make a formal declaration of independence of historical Christianity had weighty grounds, more weighty probably than some of its members were conscious of entertaining.

In considering the preference of modern Theosophists

for the great religions of the East there is occasion to weigh only the merits of Brahmanism and Buddhism, since it is with these two Oriental systems that the theosophical mind has been so enamored as practically to rate them above Christianity. The repudiation of this estimate does not, of course, involve a denial that very worthy elements may be found in both Brahmanism and Buddhism. The challenge to the theosophical judgment properly takes the form of the contention that there are glaring defects in both these religions which rationally exclude the possibility of placing them on a level with Christianity.

Brahmanism stands for one of the most radical and overgrown systems of sacerdotalism that the world has ever seen. This feature, too, does not appear a mere attachment or artificial appendage. The sacred books of the religion are deeply permeated with the notion of the deified rank of the Brahman, and respect to that rank as expressed in the caste system has been for ages a most conspicuous characteristic of the civilization of India. With extravagance in priestly assumption a kindred extravagance in magnifying the virtue of ceremonies manipulated by the priest has been closely associated. It is not too much to say that in Brahmanism the ceremonial vies with the ethical and overslaughs it at various points. Very sane maxims are, indeed, found in the Brahmanical scriptures on the superior worth of the ethical; but maxims and representations of a precisely contrary import are also found.[1] The natural result is a compromising of the supremacy which belongs of right to the ethical as against everything in the sphere of ritual. Along with these grave defects another must be charged against Brahmanism. In its representation of the Su-

[1] Vasishtha, chap. xxvii; Bundhayana, iv. 6; Laws of Manu, ii. 79.

preme Being it gives place to conceptions that are grotesquely inadequate to the thought of God as the absolute and perfect. Take that picture of Brahma as alternating between active and passive conditions, projecting the world in one state, withdrawing the world into himself in another state, living now in the day, and now in the long deep night in which all diversities are submerged and lost. How is it possible that anyone should imagine that such a doctrine is comparable to the thought of God as the ever-living, the light which cannot be invaded or superseded by darkness, the sleepless wisdom and love, the pure intelligence and holy will that work ceaselessly to lead on the universe stage by stage toward the highest possible goal? Plainly, Theosophy is convicted of making an extremely bad bargain in so far as it puts aside authentic Christianity for Brahmanism.

In the preference awarded to Buddhism an equally ill-founded judgment is apparent. What element of high worth does Buddhism contain which is not also characteristic of Christianity? The former profoundly emphasizes the duty of compassion and good will toward all. The latter is not at all behind in its emphasis upon this duty, and at the same time provides a vastly more logical basis for the energetic and persistent fulfillment of the duty. Buddhism is quietistic in its ideal. Suppression of desire is central to its conception of salvation. In consistency, therefore, the fully saved man must be disburdened of all active solicitude for his fellows. A negative, cloistral, quiescent benevolence, as opposed to a striving and world-conquering good will, is the logical outcome of Buddhistic postulates. If Buddhism has ever made any considerable exhibition of active benevolence, that achievement is rather to be imputed to the spirit and practical maxims of the founder than to a con-

sistent carrying out of its fundamental conceptions of the ideal state of the individual. Furthermore, its deficiency at this point, as compared with Christianity, is enhanced by its conception of man as a candidate for quite the reverse of a vital immortality. The end to be attained, as it represents, is entrance into *nirvana;* and *nirvana,* whatever amelioration of its significance may have been brought in ultimately, seems to have meant in original Buddhism just simply extinction of personal subsistence, the reduction of the individual to the state of the blown-out flame of a lamp.[1] Retrenching thus the significance of human personality, Buddhism, in its most authentic form, offers a less inspiring motive to work for the best development of humanity than does Christianity with its conception of men as called to be the immortal children of a divine household. It must be charged also against Buddhism that it is far less adapted than the religion of Christ to sustain the proper intensity of ethical life. In the aim of the former, escape from pain takes the foremost place. The misery of unsatisfied desire is emphasized as the great evil to be vanquished. Only a secondary stress falls upon the vileness and demerit of sin. For this deficit, too, there is no means of repair in the religion of Gautama; on the contrary, it is closely related to a distinctive shortcoming. As taking a negative attitude toward the thought of God, Buddhism lacks the great means of vitalizing the consciousness of sin which resides in a pure theistic system, with its stress upon responsibility to a holy and transcendent Person. Nor is this the whole extent of the damage resulting from the failure of original Buddhism

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[1] Oldenberg, Buddha: His Life, his Doctrine, his Order, pp. 264–274; Hopkins, Religions of India, p. 321; Sacred Books of the East, American edition, Vol. IX, Part ii, p. 275; Vol. X, Part i, pp. 63, 279, 280.

to take any account of the idea of God. The devotees of the system could not permanently leave that void unfilled. Neglect to make a suitable recognition of the Divine Being only helped to give free course to fanciful and superstitious representations of the higher powers. Notwithstanding, then, all the beautiful sayings which may be gathered from Buddhistic literature, there are such marked defects in the Buddhistic system that it requires very peculiar eyesight to see in it a proper rival of Christianity.

The Theosophic assumption of the obligations of Christianity to Buddhism require, as a ground of credence, vastly better evidence than has ever been afforded. The fact can indeed be cited that a few writers outside the theosophical school have supposed the reality of such obligations. Thus Rudolph Seydel points to a series of parallelisms between the Gospels and certain Buddhist writings, and draws the inference that the former borrowed from the latter. Furthermore, Ernst von Bunsen and Arthur Lillie have rendered support to the notion that Christianity drew largely from Essenism, which on its side found in Buddhism a principal source. But judicial scholarship finds very slight occasion to take serious account of these verdicts. Suppose some parallelisms are discoverable between the Gospels and Buddhist narratives; it still remains true that the Gospels in their sharp contrast to Buddhistic teaching on fundamental themes evince a high degree of independence. The parallels, too, are not so significant as Seydel assumes them to be. It may be contended that some of the Oriental sources on which he depends were probably of later origin than the Gospels, and that the points of resemblance are not so precise as to necessitate the supposition of borrowing from either side. As respects

the notion that Buddhistic teaching was transmitted through Essenism to Christianity, the following statement may be accounted a sober estimate of the evidence: "When we consider that in all the Palestinian Jewish literature there is not a trace of distinctively Buddhist teaching, when we bear in mind that the name of Buddha is not once associated with the Essenes, when we see scholars most competent to pronounce on the question, like Zeller, Lightfoot, Schürer, Ginsberg, Edersheim, and Conybeare, denying even a remote connection of Essenism with Buddhism, we are amply justified in setting down the theory in question as an absolute failure."[1] The supposition that Jesus was closely associated with the Essenes is stamped by Harnack as an unhistoric vagary in these terms: "Jesus could not have had any relations with the Essenes. Were that so, he would have belonged to the pupils who show their dependence on their teachers by proclaiming and doing the opposite of what they have been taught. The Essenes made a point of the most extreme purity in the eye of the law, and held severely aloof not only from the impure but even from those who were a little lax in their purity. It is only thus that we can understand their living strictly apart, their dwelling in particular places, and their practice of frequent ablutions every day. Jesus exhibited complete contrast with this mode of life: he goes in search of sinners and eats with them. So fundamental a difference alone makes it certain that he had nothing to do with the Essenes. His aims and the means which he employed divide him off from them. If he appears to coincide with them in many of his individual injunctions to his dis-

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[1] C. F. Aiken, The Dhama of Gotama the Buddha and the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, pp. 195, 196. See also Edmund Hardy, Der Buddhismus nach aelteren Pali-Werken Dargestellt.

ciples, these are accidental points of contact, as his motives were quite other than theirs."[1]

The assumption of Secularism that with the progress of society religion will fade out of sight, until finally it shall be practically extirpated from human feeling and practice, has every appearance of being rather a wish than an induction, so flimsy are the grounds that can be cited in its behalf. As John Fiske has remarked, "None can deny that religion is the largest and most ubiquitous fact connected with the life of mankind upon earth."[2] Universally art and literature and the biographies of men testify to the incomparable power of the religious incentive. Are we to be told, then, that this incentive is to be eradicated, that the future of man is to stand in complete contrast with his past? Yes, says Guyau, for man is capable of being evolved into something quite unlike his former self. Yes, says Bonham, for all reverence for ideals is destined to be extirpated from the human breast. But why should anyone care to push antireligious credulity to the extreme of such assertions? We rightly judge of what man is intrinsically by what he has shown himself to be throughout his history. To suppose that he can be evolved or desiccated into something quite unlike himself is to deal very unkindly with logic and common sense. Doubtless within limited areas seasons of a relative religious dearth may occur. But to take such instances of dearth as a prophecy of universal secularism is far from being warranted. According to the ample testimony of history, the minds and hearts of men cannot endure to be

[1] What is Christianity? first edition, p. 32. Compare Wellhausen, Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, p. 295; H. J. Holtzmann, Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie, I. 118; W. Bousset, Jesus, p. 35.

[2] Through Nature to God, p. 189.

permanently impoverished, and in the absence of normal religious satisfactions will gravitate into the vagaries and excesses of superstition. Nor can intellectual culture neutralize the natural result of religious impoverishment; for intellectual culture is powerless to abolish the deep requirements of the emotional life; and, besides, the intellect has demands for religious conceptions in forming a tolerable theory of the universe.

In relation to the Ethical Societies, it may be conceded that no slight occasion has been given for the putting forth of their contention. Beyond question, scanty justice has sometimes been rendered to morality. All too frequently it has been placed by the incautious advocate of the claims of piety in disparaging contrast with religion, where the contrast ought to have been drawn between a superficial and a profound morality, or at most between a superficial morality and a thoroughly ethical religion. A practical protest against such misleading discourse was quite in order.

But the Ethical Societies, it strikes us, have erred in attempting to bring morality to the front at the expense of religion. If the latter is a debtor to the former, the former must in the long run acknowledge profound obligations to the latter. The true relation between the two is presented in ideal form in the consciousness of Jesus. How intense his scorn of a religiosity which makes small account of the demands of righteous dealings with one's fellows! How scathing his rebuke of the man who links ceremonial scrupulosity with any species of inhumanity or moral laxity! How like a flame of fire his words burn through the pretenses of those who would claim a monopoly of merit on the score of their orthodoxism! But, on the other hand, how vital his sense of all the

higher religious truths and relationships! What strength, peace, and radiance the thought of the heavenly Father brings into his spirit! What inspiration for labor and hardihood for suffering he gains from his far-reaching vision of the kingdom of God in its destined unfoldment to a transcendent and imperishable glory! Truly in the consciousness of Jesus the proper relation between morality and religion has received an ideal exemplification, and our best discretion will be manifested in an earnest attempt to realize the model which is here set before us.

CHAPTER III

DENIAL OF THE TRANSCENDENT SONSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

I.—The Principal Instances of Denial

A current of dissent from the catholic conception of the divinity of Christ was started in England before the close of the first quarter of the eighteenth century. This current ran in the first instance in the direction of Arianism, its course being mainly through the territory of English Presbyterianism. It is understood that Nathaniel Lardner and Richard Price, among others, subscribed to the Arian doctrine. Toward the end of the century a transition began to be made to the humanitarian conception of Christ. Among the early champions of this conception Joseph Priestly, Thomas Belsham, and Theophilus Lindsey were conspicuous. The competing view persisted for a time, but its constituency was so reduced before the end of the fourth decade of the nineteenth century that a New England Unitarian could write home, "There are only three or four Arian societies in England."[1] In Ireland at the same time the Arian element, though on the wane, was relatively stronger.

The antitrinitarian movement was initiated in this country twenty or thirty years later than in England. Very soon after the middle of the eighteenth century Arianism was held and propagated in an unobtrusive manner by several prominent ministers in eastern Massachusetts. In this somewhat vague, mildly assertive type it went on winning adherents. The development occurred within the Congregational body, the breaking

[1] Life of Ezra Stiles Gannett, by William C. Gannett, p. 177.

away of King's Chapel from its Episcopalian moorings in 1787, under the leadership of James Freeman, being an exceptional instance. By communication with England, as well as by the force of inner tendencies, an incentive was given toward a transition to a modified Socinian teaching; in other words, a humanitarian teaching stripped of the Socinian prescription of worship of the exalted Christ. The transition proceeded by degrees, from the last years of the eighteenth century, but seems not to have made very large headway up to the time of the crisis in 1815 which hastened the formation of an independent communion. A letter of Channing written in that year expressed the judgment that those who held to the simple humanity of Jesus Christ formed only a small proportion of the Unitarians with whom he was associated.[1] The balance, however, was soon changed. "Stuart said to Channing as early as 1819, 'The younger men are nearly all outstripping you.' Even Professor Ware at the Divinity School was soon after teaching that to him Christ seemed a man. There were doubtless several like him, and more every year. Probably few who were over forty years old at the time of the disclosure in 1815 died other than Arians. Probably there were few under forty then who did not at least grow doubtful, if not certain, the other way."[2] The drift indicated in this statement fell little short of its perfect goal by the end of the century. Writing in 1894, J. W. Chadwick testified: "Today the pure humanity of Jesus is the prevailing doctrine of the Unitarian body. It would be hard to find among us an Arian thinking of Jesus as the creator of all worlds, himself created before time began to be. It would be only less hard to find a true Socinian thinking

[1] Life of W. E. Channing, by W. H. Channing, p. 196.
[2] W. C. Gannett, Life of E. S. Gannett, p. 183.

of Jesus as a human being exalted to the rank of God. But there are not a few who still think of him as a perfect man; and more who speak of him as such, without thinking much about it."[1] Serious thinking, our witness intimates, must serve to engender doubts, not, indeed, respecting the rare excellence of Jesus, but respecting his unblemished human perfection; and so Unitarian thinking must logically pass on to the denial that the ideal has yet been fulfilled in any individual among the sons of men.

In the view of Channing and his associates in the early part of the nineteenth century Jesus possessed an exalted dignity, was intrusted with a thoroughly exceptional mission, and was armed with a complete, divinely attested authority. "His character," wrote Channing, "has in it nothing local or temporal. It can be explained by nothing around him. His history shows him to us a solitary being, living for purposes which none but himself comprehended, and enjoying not so much as the sympathy of a single mind."[2] "We believe firmly in the divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with divine authority, and was a bright image of the divine perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated his Spirit to him without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression, and representative of God to mankind, so that in seeing and knowing him we see and know the invisible Father. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in his miracles we behold God acting; in his life and character we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love."[3]

Not a few of those who in the next generation after

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[1] Old and New Unitarian Belief, p. 160.
[2] Works, III. 121
[3] Ibid., V. 394.

Channing embraced the humanitarian doctrine were able, in spite of their revised creed, to make a pretty close approach to his conception of the dignity and worth of Christ's person. Taking a high view of human capacities, and strongly emphasizing the thought of divine immanence, they placed Christ in such vital relation with the divine and conceived him to be so largely receptive of the Father's fullness, that he was made to appear quite as sufficient for man's spiritual needs as the middle being of Arianism, who indeed was formally rated higher, but seemed to be less closely conjoined both with God and with man.

This point of view was represented by James Freeman Clarke. He saw in Jesus the ideal of manhood close-linked with divinity. In the unconsciousness of sin characteristic of the Man of Nazareth he recognized a valid sign of inward stainlessness.[1] This qualified him for perfect communion with the Father. "In all that he said and did he spoke from the knowledge of God; he acted from the life of God. Here was one, then, at last, to whom God was not an opinion, but a reality; through whose life flowed the life of God in a steady current. . . . The Word thus 'became flesh and dwelt among us.' The word of the Lord *came* to the prophets, but it *dwelt* in Christ. . . . In him truly 'dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'"[2]

In like manner F. H. Hedge strongly emphasized the vital connection of Christ's humanity with divinity, not indeed postulating in strictness a divine-human personality, yet conceiving of such a close relation between manhood and Godhead that he was not disposed to quarrel with the terms of the Chalcedonian creed.[3] As com-

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[1] Sermon, 1859. [2] Orthodoxy, its Truths and Errors, chap. viii.
[3] Ways of the Spirit and Other Essays, pp. 77, 78.

pared with Arianism he regarded the Nicene doctrine as embodying a great truth, since the former made a disjunction between God and man, while the latter accentuated their union. Indeed, he did not hesitate to describe the Council of Nicæa, because of its service to this truth, as "one of the most important assemblies that was ever convened on this earth."[1] But, while making this apparent approximation to the catholic Christology, Hedge took pains to indicate that he had not really moved on to the ground of that Christology. His view of the incarnation of the divine in Christ was closely akin to that which Schelling proclaimed in his *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums.* Incarnation, as he conceived, is a process in which Christ, though he is at the summit, does not stand alone. "Divine sonship is not exhausted in Christ. Humanity is the son of God, humanity *in esse* or *in posse.* This is the truth which Jesus represents, which he illustrates by a supreme instance."[2]

With Clarke and Hedge we may associate the English Unitarian James Martineau. Though starting with the materialistic necessitarian scheme of Priestly and Belsham, he soon threw off its fetters and began to shape his conception of the person and work of Christ according to the suggestions of an idealistic philosophy. Less stress was placed upon the notion of an authoritative delegate, and more upon that of the unique medium for manifesting, under finite conditions, the mind and heart of the Infinite. The following words testify how strongly he could put this point of view: "Christ standing in solitary greatness, and invested with unapproachable sanctity, opens at once the eye of conscience to perceive and know the pure and holy God, the Father that dwelt in

[1] Ways of the Spirit and Other Essays, pp. 350, 351.
[2] Unitarian Affirmations, p. 16.

him and made him so full of truth and grace. Him that rules in heaven we can in no wise believe to be *less perfect* than that which is most divine on earth; of anything more perfect than the meek yet majestic Jesus no heart can ever dream. And accordingly, ever since he visited our earth with blessing, the soul of Christendom has worshiped a God resembling him."[1] That this conviction remained in the mind of Martineau with but little abatement is evidenced by these words penned near the end of his career: "In Christ's life of communion with God religious experience, as known to us, reaches its acme, and the ideal relation between the human and the divine is realized. If in any other instance the elevation has been reached, it has not been historically presented so as to single itself out as a revelation to us of what we are meant and called to be. If ever something higher is set before us it will be time enough to quit the step on which we stand. But some objective personalization of our spiritual sonship to God is essential to hold us in brotherly unity together, and carry a religious inspiration into morals."[2] In common with Hedge, Martineau thought of Christ as the supreme instance of a divine-human realization. "The incarnation is true, not of Christ exclusively, but of man universally and God everlastingly. He bends into the human to dwell there, and humanity is the susceptible organ of the divine."[3]

How far Unitarianism in the present conforms to the teaching of these eminent representatives of the preceding generations it is difficult to determine. That in part it has fallen to a lower plane in its conception of Christ has been made evident by one and another exponent of contemporary thinking.

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[1] Studies of Christianity, edited by W. R. Alger, p. 194.

[2] Letter of June 5, 1895, cited by J. E. Carpenter, in James Martineau, Theologian and Teacher, pp. 593, 594.

[3] Ibid., p. 404.

At the beginning of its history American Universalism was not distinguished by any special antagonism to the catholic Christology. John Murray's trinitarianism may have been of the Sabellian type, but his most distinguished colaborer, Elhanan Winchester, is not known to have renounced the common orthodox theory of the divine triunity. Scarcely, however, had the line been crossed into the nineteenth century before a decided transition was inaugurated. Hosea Ballou criticised the doctrine of the Trinity in 1805. Within a dozen years from that time, as we are informed by the historian of the denomination, the number of Trinitarians in the Universalist ministry had been reduced to two.[1]

Antitrinitarian sentiment, more commonly of the humanitarian type, has had representatives outside of the domains which have been considered in the foregoing sketch. A sporadic manifestation of it has occurred in Germany. There is reason, however, to doubt the warrant for the assertion which is sometimes put forth respecting its wide prevalence in that country. Doubtless among the numerous adherents of the Ritschlian school, as well as in the more limited ultra-liberal school, advocates of the pure humanitarian conception of Christ are to be found. But the more representative theologians of the Ritschlians, however unwilling they may be to commit themselves distinctly to the formulas of the traditional Christology, have not declared for the proper humanitarian conception. Their Christology is of a somewhat agnostic type, which makes room for a transcendent factor in Christ, and even affirms the presence of such a factor, though stopping short of an attempt to construe it closely. To go further would involve a de-

[1] Richard Eddy, Universalism in America, II. 104.

parture from the example of the founder of their school; for Albrecht Ritschl refused to deal with the metaphysical side of Christology. He considered it sufficient to maintain that the practical worth of divinity pertains to Christ as reflecting the divine attributes and asserting over the race an unlimited moral lordship. "An authority," he said, "which excludes all other standards or subordinates them to itself, which at the same time fundamentally directs all human trust in God, has the worth of divinity."[1]

In the Christological discussions of Professor Julius Kaftan quite emphatic recognition is given to a transcendent factor in Christ. He notices that in the self-consciousness of Christ there was an extraordinary element, not merely as respects official standing, but as respects relationship to God, a sense of oneness with the Father which was the spring of life and activity. He affirms that the distinction between him and his disciples reaches beyond the fact that he is the head of the body to which they pertain as members. "His significance lies precisely in this, that he is the mediator between God and men, inasmuch as he belongs with God and again with men. In order to be that he must have stood in a relation to God which in an emphatic sense was peculiar to himself."[2] This lofty, peculiar relation to the divine on the part of Christ is the needful basis of the exceptional claims of Christianity. "The effort is ever being renewed to bring him into the line and sink him to the plane of a religious hero, without at the same time giving up the absolute character of Christianity. These attempts will not succeed, for Christianity is the absolute religion only in case it stands in unique connection with

[1] Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung, III. 376.
[2] Dogmatik, §§ 41–47.

the absolute God. And it does this only on condition that this connection is given in Jesus Christ. He who will have the one will be brought to the inner conviction that he cannot let go the other. He who knows Christianity as the absolute religion will not be able permanently to forbear agreeing with the church in confessing Jesus Christ as Lord."[1]

The representations of Professor Max Reischle involve the like contention that the Christ of history stands in a unique relation to God and man and furnishes a basis for faith which cannot be superseded. If it be alleged, he says, that Christ as historically conditioned can have only a relative, not an absolute, significance, it is to be replied that this is no ascertained truth, but a dogmatic assumption, based in a pantheistic or naturalistic evolutionary world-view.[2]

Adolf Harnack, while careful to respect the agnostic phase of the Ritschlian Christology, gives sufficiently definite hints of faith in a peculiar and transcendent sonship pertaining to Christ. "Jesus is convinced," he says, "that he knows God in a way in which no one ever knew him before. In this consciousness he knows himself to be the called and instituted of God, to be the *Son,* and hence he can say, *My* God and *my* Father, and in this invocation he puts something which belongs to no one but himself."[3] "No one who accepts the Gospel, and tries to understand him who gave it to us, can fail to affirm that here the divine appeared in as pure a form as it can appear upon earth, and to feel that for those who followed him Jesus was himself the strength of the Gospel."[4]

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[1] Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, Nro. 1, 1897.
[2] Ibid., Nro. 3, 1897.
[3] What is Christianity? p. 128.
[4] Ibid., 146.

One who is attached to the forms in which the catholic creeds affirm the divine nature and relationship of Christ will be much inclined to charge the Ritschlian teaching with a deficit. But it is apparent from the citations made that leading exponents of that teaching assign to Christ the practical worth of divinity, and at least do not negative the supposition of a unique metaphysical relation between him and the Father.

II.—The Denial in the Light of New Testament Attestations

The conclusion that large portions of the New Testament ascribe to Christ a transcendent sonship, a filial relation and lordship which ascend to an incalculable height above the human plane, is not in the present the property of any special wing of Christian scholars. Critics whose respect for traditional theories imposes upon them scarcely any restraint show themselves in numerous instances about as free to proclaim this conclusion as are those who pay the greatest deference to the theological inheritance from the past. Very recently one of the former class has penned words like the following: "However imperfect their methods of interpretation may appear to modern minds, it would be wrong to charge the Greek apologists and fathers with seriously mistaking the trend of New Testament teaching. And the great ecumenic creeds rest upon patristic Christology. These creeds are a consistent development of certain ideas that unquestionably hold an important place in New Testament literature. . . . The chief factors in the construction of Christological dogma were an honest interpretation of the Scriptures and an equally honest interpretation of the facts of Christian experience."[1] Not less

[1] Nathaniel Schmidt, The Prophet of Nazareth, pp. 4, 6.

significant is the admission of Beyschlag, as proceeding from one who gave full demonstration of his strong preference for the simple humanitarian conception of Christ's person. "The author of the Apocalypse," he says, "like Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, regarded Christ as a preëxistent intermediate being between God and the world, God and humanity, related to ὁ θεός as his unique image, and to the world and humanity as a personal archetype, and who, after mediating the creation of the world, appeared among his brethren in the fullness of the times as a child of man and offspring of David, in order to gain an eternal kingship over them by his life, death, and resurrection—in a word, the author of the Apocalypse united the Logos idea with the idea of Messiah realized in Jesus."[1] That the Christology of the fourth Gospel is not at all below that which Beyschlag here ascribes to the Pauline Epistles, to Hebrews, and to the Apocalypse is much too common a verdict in the liberal school of critics to make it appropriate to cite specific instances.[2] There is, therefore, very slight occasion to attempt any formal proof that the thought of the transcendent sonship of Christ is imbedded in extensive portions of the New Testament.

The section of the New Testament relative to which our theme imposes upon us a specific inquiry is that contained in the Synoptical Gospels. Not infrequently the confident affirmation is made that it is only a purely human consciousness in Christ that is attested by these Gospels. This cannot be admitted. It is surely something more than a purely human consciousness which comes to manifestation in this mighty declaration: "All

[1] New Testament Theology, II. 380.

[2] See, among others, H. J. Holtzmann, Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie, Otto Pfleiderer, Urchristenthum; Julius Grill, Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des vierten Evangeliums; Paul Wernle, The Beginnings of Christianity.

things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."[1] And in many other sayings of Christ there are kindred suggestions of a sense of thoroughly extraordinary position and relationship. He reminds the Pharisees that it is appropriate to think of the Messiah not merely as David's son, but also as David's Lord.[2] He so identifies himself with the kingdom of heaven as to allow of no antithesis between relation to it and relation to himself. He proclaims those blessed who are persecuted for his sake.[3] He represents that confession or denial of him before men shall earn confession or denial before the Father and the angels.[4] He pictures the awards of the great day of judgment as apportioned according as affection or despite has been shown to himself.[5] In the parable of the vineyard he represents servants of the owners as being sent to receive the fruits, and last of all the beloved Son, thus placing himself on a distinctly higher plane than the prophetical messengers of Israel.[6] While emphasizing the impossibility of forecasting the day of judgment, he notes that the day is hidden from the knowledge of men, angels, and the Son, indicating by this order of subjects his consciousness that the Son's prerogative stands above that of the whole creaturely universe.[7] He declares himself greater than the temple,[8] lord of the sabbath,[9] qualified to forgive sins.[10] He offers to gather the weary and heavy laden to himself for peace and rest.[11] He promises to be in the midst where two or three are gathered in

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[1] Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22. [2] Matt. xxii 45; Luke xx. 44.
[3] Matt. v. 11. [4] Matt. x. 32, 33; Mark viii. 38; Luke xii. 8, 9, ix. 26.
[5] Matt. xxv. 34–46. [6] Matt. xxi. 33–39; Luke xx. 9–15.
[7] Matt. xxiv. 26; Mark xiii. 32. [8] Matt xii. 6.
[9] Matt. xii. 8; Mark ii. 28; Luke vi. 5.
[10] Matt. ix. 2–6; Mark ii. 4–10; Luke v. 20–24, vii 47. [11] Matt. xi. 28.

his name,[1] and to supply speech and wisdom to his disciples when they shall be called to answer before adversaries.[2] He claims to be endowed with all authority in heaven and earth.[3] He describes the angels, whom Jewish thought made the retinue of Jehovah, as sent forth at his behest and serving as his messengers.[4] He represents, finally, that all nations are to be gathered before him and to receive at his hands the awards of eternity.[5] Now, who among men, who that is able to demonstrate his sanity by any approach to the unique balance of the finest human traits which was exemplified in Christ, would ever think of coming before his fellows with such sentences upon his lips? The Synoptical Gospels, then, notwithstanding their relative engrossment in a narrative as distinguished from a theological function, make for faith in a transcendent element in the consciousness of Christ. Occasionally confession is made of this fact even by a representative of a Christological theory to which the fact seems in no way to be congenially related. Thus Wernle, though rejecting the divinity of Christ in terms that might be regarded as savoring of rudeness, finds in the Synoptical Gospels evidences which compel him to impute to the subject of these biographies a consciousness which passes beyond human measures. Referring to the lofty assumptions of Christ in forgiving sins and claiming obedience, he says: "Now, it is clear that a self-consciousness that is more than merely human speaks from these words. And this is the mystery of the origin of Christianity. What we need to do above all is to accept it as a fact—a fact which demands a patient and reverent hearing."[6] The suggestion is not far to seek that congruity of thinking requires correspondence

[1] Matt. xviii. 20. [2] Luke xxi. 15. [3] Matt. xxviii. 18.
[4] Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. [5] Matt. xxv. 31–46.
[6] The Beginnings of Christianity, I. 39.

between self-consciousness on the one hand and personality and essential relations on the other. Acknowledgment of the transcendent sonship of Christ would seem, on the premise admitted by Wernle, to be in order.

Since to the modern mind the proper Arian view of the Son has become almost universally distasteful, theological thinking which aims to be faithful to the New Testament cannot well escape from interpreting the transcendence of Christ in a way which is at least closely akin to the Athanasian or Nicene rendering. Room may be made for an aspect of subordination in the Son of God; but the endeavor must be to construe him as the eternally filial, the counterpart of the Father, the one who dwelt in the bosom of the Father before the ages, and manifested him through a perfect filial record at the fullness of time.

CHAPTER IV

UTILITARIAN AND NATURALISTIC ETHICS

I.—Specimen Theories

The diversities disclosed in a review of ethical treatises of the last century relate much more largely to theoretical questions about the sources and nature of moral obligation than to conclusions respecting the content of the moral ideal. The great majority of these treatises, in whatever way they may deal with the theoretical questions, agree in accepting substantially the altruistic Christian ideal of sympathy and service, the ideal which enjoins a loving regard for the good of the general body alongside of the pursuit of individual interests. Stanch utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham, advocates of a qualified utilitarianism like Leslie Stephen, critics as little respectful of Christian traditions as Strauss and Feuerbach, positivists like Comte, materialists like Büchner, advocates of a materialistic evolutionism like Spencer and Haeckel, and pessimists of the type of Schopenhauer, all have approached quite near to the commonly recognized Christian standard of conduct as respects the relation of man with man.

In a few instances, however, the content itself of the moral ideal which commands general assent in the Christian world has been challenged. To some extent this has been done in the name of Secularism, as appears in the adverse remarks of Bonham on the law of equal love to the neighbor, and especially in his contemptuous repudiation of the obligation to love one's enemies.[1] But the

[1] Secularism, its Progress and its Morals, pp. 197–204.

most conspicuous examples of a radical disparagement of the moral ideal of Christianity were furnished by Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche, the former writing near the middle of the century, and the latter in the closing decades.

In the book entitled *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*[1] Stirner figures as the advocate of an egoism to which no other bounds are set than those which pertain to limited power. In his view might is the sole and sufficient basis of right. Respect either for God or for man does not come in as a modifying factor. In deferring to the human genus, Feuerbach, he says, has done no better than to make an exchange of gods. "My affair is neither divine nor human, but solely my own. . . . I am my own genus, without norm, without law, without model. . . . What care I for the common weal? The common weal as such is not my weal, but only the extreme point of self-renunciation. . . . I am entitled to everything over which I can exercise mastery. I have a right to overthrow Zeus, Jehovah, God, if I can. . . . No majesty, no holiness, nothing which I know how to master makes a limit for me."[2]

If not more radical than Stirner in his repudiation of current ethical standards, Nietzsche has gone quite beyond him in the volume and violence of the literary warfare which he has waged against those standards. As Fouillée has remarked, "In all his works he takes the romantic attitude of a Faust in revolt against all law, all morality, all social life."[3]

Though rating Schopenhauer more than any other as his philosophical master, Nietzsche contemns utterly the

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[1] The title-page indicates that "Max Stirner" is another name for Kaspar Schmidt.

[2] Pages 14, 72, 213, 221, 248 in Universal-Bibliothek, Vol. CCCXII.

[3] Nietzsche et l'Immoralisme, Preface.

Buddhistic quietism in which the ethical speculation of Schopenhauer eventuated. The fundamental characteristic of life, as he conceived, is will to power. In its very essence life is aggressive force. It reaches with unsparing hand after mastery, and makes a perfectly normal manifestation of itself in mastering everything that is too feeble to resist. The man of might may indeed render courtesy and respect toward those whom he has discovered to be his peers, but no obligation of sympathy for the inferior crowd rests upon him. The morality of sympathy is the morality of slaves, which in their impotence they have concocted against the lordship of the regal souls who are competent to exercise sovereignty. It is the attempt of the lamb to censure the eagle. All altruistic morality is guilty of using false measures, and is linked with weakness and decadence. "What is good? All that to which the feeling of power, the will to power, the power itself, in man gives heed. What is bad [*schlecht*]? All that which springs out of weakness. What is weal? The feeling that power is on the increase, that opposition to it is vanquished."[1]

Occupying this point of view, Nietzsche, it is evident, must regard Christianity as a proper object of abhorrence. As the religion of sympathy, he contends, it works toward abasement. It is intrinsically opposed to manly development. Its idea of God is one of the most corrupt that ever found place in the world. In short, "Christianity is an insurrection of all that creeps on the ground against the high."[2] Thus even Voltaire's antipathy to Christianity is quite outdone. In his mad deification of egoistic force Nietzsche is led to assail the Christian ideal with a species of demoniacal fury."[3]

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[1] Der Antichrist, § 2. [2] Ibid, § 43.

[3] See in particular his Also Sprach Zarathustra; Jenseits von Gut und Böse; Zur Genealogie der Moral; Götzen-Dämerung; Der Antichrist.

The theories of Stirner and Nietzsche are too eccentric to claim serious attention. We make haste, therefore, to consider certain phases of utilitarian and evolutionary ethics.

The strict utilitarian platform was promulgated in England in the early part of the nineteenth century by Jeremy Bentham, whose zeal for it was specially stimulated by his conviction that it was adapted to afford an excellent basis for practical politics and civic reform. "Nature has placed mankind," says Bentham, "under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure,* It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne; they govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think. . . . *The principle of utility* recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and of law."[1] This principle, Bentham remarks, may be charged with being Epicurean; but properly understood that term involves no discredit. "Epicurus, it is true, is the only one among the ancients who had the merit of having known the true source of morality; but to suppose that his doctrine leads to the consequences imputed to it is to suppose that happiness can be the enemy of happiness itself." Again, it may be alleged that, if the principle of utility is to be enthroned, each individual will constitute himself a judge of his own interest, and will proceed at once to discard an obligation which is regarded as in conflict with that interest. In reply it is to be affirmed both that a man must be permitted to act as judge of his own interest, and that his

[1] Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Works, I. 1.

investment with this prerogative does not afford him a reasonable ground for treating his engagements with indifference. "He who is not a judge of what is suitable for himself is less than an infant, is a fool. The obligation which binds men to their engagements is nothing but the feeling of an interest of a superior class, which outweighs an inferior interest. Men are not always held by the particular utility of a certain engagement; but in the case in which the engagement becomes burthensome to one of the parties they are still held by the general utility of engagements—by the confidence that each enlightened man wishes to have placed in his word, that he may be considered as trustworthy, and enjoy the advantages attached to probity and esteem."[1]

It follows from the premises of Bentham that conduct is to be measured solely by reference to its effect upon the sum total of pleasure. Motives are not in themselves a proper measure, but are to be reckoned good or bad according as they make for pleasure or pain.[2] Morality depends upon consequences. In wisely calculating the consequences of conduct in respect of the aggregate of pleasure, and in conforming conduct to the calculation, a man fulfills his complete function as a moral agent. It is to be noticed, however, that the pleasure which is to claim supreme regard is not simply that of the individual. This much is implied in Bentham's use of the formula, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," as affording the test of right and wrong.

John Stuart Mill, in common with the other eminent exponents of the sensational or associational philosophy in England, gave assent to the general idea of Bentham's utilitarianism. He defines that idea in the following explicit terms: "The creed which accepts, as the

[1] Works, I. 12. [2] Ibid., I. 48.

foundation of morals, utility, or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure."[1] That the ultimate aim of conduct must be happiness is regarded by Mill as quite obvious. "There is in reality," he says, "nothing desired except happiness. Whatever is desired otherwise than as a means to some end beyond itself, and ultimately to happiness, is desired as a part of happiness, and is not desired for itself until it has become so."[2]

Mill joined, however, with his general acceptance of the creed of utilitarian morals a token of departure. This may be recognized in the following statement: "It must be admitted that utilitarian writers in general have placed the superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency, safety, uncostliness, etc., of the former—that is, in their circumstantial advantages rather than in their intrinsic nature. And on all these points utilitarians have fully proved their case; but they might have taken the other, and, as it may be called, higher ground, with entire consistency. It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that, while in estimating all other things quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone." No intelligent being would care to be simply an animal for the sake of the animal's pleasures. "It is better to be a human being dis-

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[1] Utilitarianism, p. 91 in the "Ethics of John Stuart Mill," edited by Charles Douglas, 1897. [2] Ibid., pp. 154, 155.

satisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."[1] As his language implies, Mill supposed that in taking this view he still remained faithful to the utilitarian platform. But this cannot well be granted. To make qualitative distinctions among pleasures, to rate one as of higher order than another, not merely in extent, or in—what is the same thing—intensity, is to assume another standard of worth than mere pleasure. It may be much to the credit of Mill that he admitted this order of distinctions, but he did not do so as a consistent utilitarian.[2]

In the latter half of the century the utilitarian theory was brought into conjunction with the doctrine of evolution. A conspicuous example of this conjunction is presented in the teaching of Herbert Spencer. He was not, indeed, fully satisfied with the scheme of Bentham. It seemed to him to be a mistake to make happiness the direct aim in conduct. He thought that moral science is competent to go beyond a mere generalization of the results of actions. It can determine what kinds of action must necessarily produce happiness, and thus is qualified to lay down laws which should be obeyed irrespective of any direct estimation of pleasure or pain.[3] At the same time, Spencer approved the Benthamite notion that the ultimate standard for estimating actions lies in their bearing upon happiness. He criticised Aristotle for seeking to define happiness in terms of virtue instead of defining virtue in terms of happiness. "The implied belief," he said, "that virtue can be defined otherwise than in terms of happiness is allied to the Platonic belief that

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[1] Ethics of John Stuart Mill, pp. 93, 97.

[2] Compare Martineau, Types of Ethical Theory, II. 317, 330; Paulsen, System der Ethik, I. 247; T. H. Green, Prolegomena to Ethics, p. 170.

[3] Letter to Mill, cited by C. M. Williams, a Review of the Systems of Ethics Founded on the Theory of Evolution, pp. 35, 36.

there is an ideal or absolute good, which gives to particular and relative goods their property of goodness."[1]

Conduct was furthermore estimated by Spencer according to its bearing on life, good conduct being that which is favorable to the totality of life in one's self, one's offspring, and one's fellows.[2] In this use of terms the philosopher doubtless had no design to infringe on the utilitarian principle, it being regarded by him as an understood maxim that pleasure-giving actions are identical with life-favoring actions.

In accordance with his thoroughgoing evolutionary scheme Spencer conceived of morals as a result pure and simple of a cosmic process. The human race was evolved out of a non-moral base, and in the human race by a long-continued process of selection certain forms of moral belief were instated, and these were transmitted through the medium of nervous modifications with accumulating strength. "Just in the same way," writes Spencer, "that I believe the intuition of space, possessed by any living individual, to have arisen from organized and consolidated experiences of all antecedent individuals who bequeathed to him their slowly developed nervous organizations, so do I believe that the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continued transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition—certain emotions responding to right conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility."[3]

In the order of evolution, according to Spencer, egoism precedes altruism; but the latter follows closely in the wake of the former, and mounts up through ascending

[1] Data of Ethics, § 13. [2] Ibid., § 8. [3] Ibid., § 45.

stages. "As there has been an advance by degrees from unconscious parental altruism to conscious parental altruism of the highest kind, so has there been an advance by degrees from the altruism of the family to social altruism."[1] Supposing that this growth of altruistic impulses and habits is to proceed, Spencer pictures as the goal of evolution an ideal society in which individual and general interests will be thoroughly harmonized, and the conflict between duty and inclination will be abolished.

Taking as emphatic a view as did Spencer of the all-comprehending reach of evolution, Huxley differed from him in his frank admission that the cosmic process affords no intelligible explanation of the validity of moral distinctions. An examination of that process may serve in a measure to reveal how diverse moral products arise; but an account of the genesis of the products is quite another thing than the justification of the approval of one order as against another. "The propounders," writes Huxley, "of what is called 'the ethics of evolution' adduce a number of more or less interesting facts and more or less sound arguments in favor of the conclusion that the moral sentiments arose, in the same way as other natural phenomena, by a process of evolution. I have little doubt, for my own part, that they are on the right track; but as the immoral sentiments have no less been evolved, there is, so far, as much natural sanction for the one as the other. The thief and the murderer follow nature as much as the philanthropist. Cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about; but in itself it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before. Indeed, the predominant cosmical method is so far from affording

[1] Data of Ethics, § 76.

insight into ethical demands that it seems itself to be distinctly counter to those demands. The practice which is ethically best involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect but shall help his fellows; its influence is directed not so much to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence. . . . Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society is realized not in imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it."[1] Such a view of the intrinsic heartlessness of nature evidently affords a very scanty basis for optimism. Huxley confesses as much. "The theory of evolution," he says, "encourages no millennial expectations." The upward road may be pursued for a long period, but sooner or later the downward route must be commenced. Meanwhile men will make the most of their opportunities not by any direct attempt to fulfill hedonist maxims, but rather by casting aside the notion that escape from pain and sorrow is the proper object of life."[2]

With Leslie Stephen we find about the same qualification of the utilitarian theory as appears in the comments of Spencer. In his own exposition of the nature and genesis of morals he makes much account of social instincts and needs—a point of view which had been emphasized by Darwin.[3] By way of summarizing his main contentions Stephen remarks: "Morality is a product of the social factor; the individual is moralized

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[1] Evolution and Ethics, Romanes Lecture of 1893, pp. 31–34.
[2] Ibid., pp. 36, 37.
[3] Descent of Man, Vol. I, chap. iii.

through his identification with the social organism; the conditions, therefore, of the security of morality are the conditions of the persistence of society; and if we ask from the scientific point of view what these conditions are, we can only reply by stating that the race is dependent upon the environment, by tracing, so far as we are able, the conditions under which it has been developed, and trying to foresee the future from the past."[1] That in the naturalistic scheme of Stephen any better outcome is guaranteed than that which is outlined in the somber sketch of Huxley is not apparent.

Haeckel in his brief dogmatic references to the origin of morality lays the whole stress on physiological and social antecedents. His principal propositions are contained in the following sentences: "The notion of duty can be traced to a long series of phyletic modifications of the phenomena of the cortex. . . . Morality, whether we take it in the narrower or broader sense, can always be traced to the physiological function of adaptation, which is closely connected through nutrition with the self-maintenance of the organism. . . . Social habits become moral habits, and their laws are afterward taught as sacred duties, and form the basis of the juridical order. The morals of nations are nothing more than social instincts, acquired by adaptation, and passed on from generation to generation by heredity."[2]

The ethical teaching of Guyau, while proceeding no less than the foregoing theories from the naturalistic standpoint, is distinguished by a special effort to reconcile egoism and altruism. Both, he maintains, are based in the very nature of life, in its intrinsic tendency at once to sustain and to enlarge itself. This is the fundamental tendency to which even the pursuit of happiness is subor-

[1] The Science of Ethics, p. 454. [2] The Wonders of Life, chap. xviii.

dinate. Comparing this point of view with that of the hedonist school, Guyau remarks: "We are far distant from Bentham and the utilitarians, who everywhere try to avoid pain, who see in pain the irreconcilable enemy; it is as if one would not breathe too strongly for fear of too great expenditure. Even in Spencer there is still too much utilitarianism. Besides, he too often looks at things from the outside, and does not see in the unselfish instincts anything but a product of society. There is, we believe, in the heart of individual life itself an evolution corresponding to the evolution of social life which makes the latter possible, and which is the cause of it instead of the result. . . . Life, like fire, only maintains itself by communicating itself, and this is none the less true with regard to the intelligence than with regard to the body. It is as impossible to shut up the intelligence as to shut up flame; it exists in order to radiate. We find the same force of expansion in sensibility. We need to share our joy; we need to share our sorrow. It is our whole nature which is *sociable*. Life does not know the absolute classifications and divisions of the logicians and metaphysicians; it cannot be entirely selfish even if it wished to be. We are open on all sides, encroaching and encroached upon. This springs from the fundamental law which biology teaches us: *Life is not only nutrition; it is production and fecundity.* To live is to *spend* as well as to *gain*."[1]

As might be expected, all these advocates of naturalistic ethics deny freedom in the sense of alternativity. In justification of this denial they commonly contend that an act which does not stand to antecedent character or feeling in the relation of an effect pure and simple must be

[1] A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction, trans. by Gertrude Kapteyn, pp. 88, 209, 210.

rated as characterless or destitute of moral significance. With equal unanimity these writers make no place for a divine sanction of obligation. If they do not say with Nietzsche that the adoption of any point of view by theologians is a sure sign of its falsity, they do hold that theological conceptions cannot afford any valid assistance in construing the subject of morals. Guyau, with frank atheistic irreverence, declares, "God has become, and will become more and more, useless."[1] Even Leslie Stephen is at pains to argue that the theistic postulate is not of the slightest use in interpreting the ethical side of life.[2]

II.—Points of Failure in the Theories

In making qualitative distinctions between different kinds of pleasures, Mill, as was noticed, virtually challenged the utilitarian principle that pleasure is the sole and sufficient measure of conduct. Why did Mill admit such distinctions? In all probability because his knowledge of his own inner life and his acquaintance with his fellows made it apparent to him that large account is actually taken of qualitative differences in pleasures, that men repeatedly distinguish one gratification as higher, and worthier, and holier than another, and not merely as larger and more intense. In his revision of the utilitarian theory he was simply qualifying an extravagant assumption out of deference to well-attested facts. For, as Ladd has remarked, "It is a fundamental and indisputable fact that men estimate the different conscious states of the self as differing in value according to a standard which is not merely quantitative. In other words, goods differ, as estimated in human consciousness, not only in degrees, but also in excellence or worth."[3]

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[1] A Sketch of Morality, p. 60. [2] The Science of Ethics, pp. 454, 455.
[3] Philosophy of Conduct, p. 41.

Equally indisputable is the fact that in making these qualitative distinctions men are ruled by a sense of obligation. Their moral sense requires them to rate one form of pleasure as superior to another. And this evidently means the rejection by the moral sense of the notion that pleasure in itself affords a complete norm. If the quality of the pleasure must be looked after—its altruistic character, its intellectuality, its nobility, its spirituality, its holiness, its godlikeness—then obviously the conceptions by which quality is measured must have a place in the norm of conduct enthroned in the moral sense.

No doubt the utilitarian is right in contending that contemplated pleasure is both actually and legitimately a great motive-power in conduct. What is to be challenged is the assumption that pleasure, or happiness, either is or ought to be the sole motive-power. It must plainly come into the account in any complete vision of things. No one who believes in a rational world order can believe that conduct and happiness are indifferently related. Good conduct, he is compelled to hold, must in the long run eventuate in happiness; holiness must ultimately minister to blessedness. In other words, if the world scheme is rational and moral, one real value which is open to pursuit therein must harmonize with another real value. The mistake of the utilitarian consists in substituting the notion of a single value for the notion of harmoniously related values; or—if one prefers that form of expression—in emphasizing one element of value to the neglect of other elements. Happiness is assuredly a value; but to the normal man nobility, righteousness, and conformity to the personal and social ideal are also values. He pursues them as desirable and obligatory in themselves, and not merely because of their subserviency to

happiness, though he feels that they must be harmoniously related to the latter value, and that he would be lacking in appreciation of them if he could admit that they were intrinsically suited to despoil him of that value.

The ultra assumption of naturalistic evolutionism, that morality has been evolved from a nonmoral ground, encounters substantially the same criticism as that which stands against the attempt to get intelligence from a nonintelligent ground. As Spencer, Haeckel, and other naturalistic evolutionists were far from success in this attempt,[1] so they fail to justify their assumption of the derivation of morality from the play of nonmoral cosmic forces. The failure is indeed a double one, since morality, besides implying sensibility of a special kind, is conditioned upon intelligence. To get the moral agent, then, out of forces that are described as acting simply in mechanical and chemical ways has a look of sheer magic. The derivation is, in fact, a mere pretense. This is well illustrated in Spencer's Data of Ethics. One looks in vain for any suggestion of the ethical in the original factors of the universe as pictured by him. Nor does one find in his representations of the biological process, for the greater part of its course, any valid suggestions of the ethical. As an acute critic of the Synthetic Philosophy has remarked: "We continually find in Mr. Spencer's exposition that, notwithstanding his attempt to affiliate ethics upon the biological law, it is only in the increased correlation of subjective individuals that ethics arises, and it is only the modification of the individual by society, and the mental and emotional growths in the individual consequent on the action of the social environment, that constitute the groundwork of ethics."[2]

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[1] See part i, chap. ii, sect. ii, v; chap. iv, sects. ii, iii.
[2] Malcolm Guthrie, On Spencer's Data of Ethics, p. 57.

Society is thus in reality offered as the explanation of ethics. But the explanation is itself very much in need of being explained. Society is only an aggregate of individuals, and, unless the individuals as such possess an ethical groundwork, what means has society of working moral effects? "Mr. Spencer, indeed, supposes men to have been scared into moral obligation by the baton of the primitive policeman, the ostracism of primitive society, and the hell of the primitive priest. How a society could exist to deal out these political, social, and religious sanctions, unless it rested on a moral basis, the evolutionist does not explain. And one may, therefore, be pardoned for seeing here only another of the countless attempts to derive morality from ideas and institutions which presuppose it."[1] Society is, of course, a potent agent in developing the moral aptitudes of the individual, but society no more explains the existence of the moral nature in man than schools explain the existence of the mathematical faculty. Far from giving an intelligible account of morality, naturalistic evolutionism serves only by its futile efforts to emphasize the great truths that it is utterly vain to attempt to graft morality upon a primitively nonmoral subject, and that the rational explanation of the moral subject is to be found in a moral background to the creaturely universe. It was noticed that Guyau qualified the function of society in the production of morality, and emphasized, as the prime source of the moral sentiments, the impulsions which belong to individual life as such. To this extent he improved upon the platform of some of the representatives of the naturalistic school. On the other hand, however, in assimilating morality to a kind of vegetative working of life potencies he is remote from a satisfactory exposition.

[1] J. G. Schurman, The Ethical Import of Darwinism, pp. 147-149.

A cardinal objection to all the theories which are here considered lies in their fatalism or unqualified necessitarianism. The weighty character of this objection has been urged in another connection.[1] It only remains, accordingly, to notice here the plea that is offered for the superior congruity of the necessitarian hypothesis with the assignment of moral quality to actions. The plea is that actions are characterless save as they are the outflow of the antecedent character of the individual, save as they are in the strict sense determined by that character. To this allegation a reply may be made in the first place by way of counter charge. It may be said, and justly said, that very little moral character belongs to the action of a mere instrument; that it makes no appreciable difference whether the instrument is conscious or not, so long as it is only an instrument; that the action of a man absolutely determined by a character given to him, or wrought by a series of absolutely determined choices, is the action of an instrument pure and simple, an instrument of the Creator or the cosmos or whatever else may be regarded as the ultimate ground of determinations; that consequently such an action, whatever æsthetic impress may attach to it, is in the proper point of view of morals essentially characterless. In the second place, positive illustration may be given of the arbitrariness of the necessitarian in assuming that an action must be strictly determined by antecedent character in order to be saved from falling under the category of the indifferent or characterless. Antecedent character may be a mighty persuasive even where it is not strictly determining, and so may come to manifestation in the general run of habitual actions. Moreover, an action may serve to realize an increment of character in the direction of

[1] Part i, chap. ii, sect. ii.

good or of evil. Every time the individual performs, in the face of competing alternatives, an action above his ordinary level, he gives himself an improved character through that very action, which is thus quite remote from being characterless—is, in fact, penetrated through and through with moral quality as a character-forming action. In the reverse case the individual lowers his character. Here lies the intelligible account of progress in character and of responsibility for the outcome. Give a man a real part in forming his moral disposition, and you have a rational ground for making him chargeable with its progressive improvement or deterioration. Deny him that part, and you forfeit the theoretical warrant for making him chargeable. You reduce him from the plane of the moral agent to that of the thing affording a more or less æsthetic impression. You affront his moral consciousness by turning its most fundamental attestations into illusions. This, we contend, is much too great a price to pay for an abstract notion of the law of causation—a notion unwarrantably intolerant of the fact of creative efficiency. The necessitarian might better modify his imperious abstraction than disparage the standing deliverances of man's moral consciousness as illusions. While it may be a dictate of reason that no change can be wrought without an expenditure of efficiency, it may still be true that personality has the unique distinction of being able to use efficiency in more than one way under given conditions.

Reference was made to the very inhospitable treatment awarded by the theories under review to the theistic conception. In some instances that conception has even been charged with a disturbing effect upon ethics, as implying that right and wrong are made such by the determinations of an infinite will. Spencer assumes that

this is the common postulate of theological parties.[1] It hardly needs to be said that the assumption is grossly unhistoric. Duns Scotus, it is true, has been followed by some extreme advocates of divine sovereignty in making the bare will of God the ultimate standard; but more commonly the view of Thomas Aquinas, that the will of God is conditioned by his intellectual and moral nature, has been followed.[2] In recent times the conclusion of the "Angelic Doctor" has claimed a substantially undisputed supremacy, being held even by the most resolute champions of divine sovereignty, like Charles Hodge.[3] The theological claim, accordingly, is not that the bare will of God makes right and wrong, but rather that the perfect norm of righteousness has its ultimate ground in the nature of God—in his absolutely perfect intelligence and ethical disposition.

Keeping in mind this interpretation of the relation of divine personality to the moral standard, we cannot admit that the thought of God has any such insignificant value for ethics as is assumed by naturalistic evolutionists. The essential content of the moral ideal may, indeed, be discovered with reasonable confidence by an examination of human experience and an analysis of human nature; but the connections of that ideal are by no means a matter of indifference. If in the regress of our thought we come to a blindly working energy, a force operating under the law of absolute necessity, we are put under constraint to mar the ideal itself by cutting out from it the element of freedom, since that which has in itself no capacity of freedom cannot be supposed to generate the free. Then, too, if freedom must be reckoned an illusion, the title of moral distinctions to be placed under any

[1] Data of Ethics, § 18.
[2] See the author's History of Christian Doctrine, I. 336, II. 93–95, 310, 311.
[3] Systematic Theology, part i, chap. v, § 9.

more honorable category may easily be called in question. Thus a great advantage in rounding out and safeguarding the moral ideal comes from making free personality the ultimate ground. No other ground is congenially related to the thought of man as a free person. Also in the forecast the theistic conception affords a very decided advantage. The significance of the moral ideal depends in no small degree upon its prospective theater. What guarantees the suitable theater? Not simply the law of the survival of the fittest, if that law means only that those forms of life are entitled to survive which are best adapted to meet the conditions. Under deteriorating cosmic conditions it might come about, as Huxley observes, that lichens would be the fittest to survive, and so would be entitled to the field as opposed to all higher forms. But lichens are not favorable subjects for illustrating the moral ideal, and naturalistic evolutionism in its failure to furnish guarantees that any better subjects will be afforded in perpetuity cannot be regarded as giving high honor to that ideal. It is a chilling and discouraging theory as compared with the Christian theistic conception of an all-wise and holy God, who makes it his great purpose to lead forward a countless host of immortal children in the ways of moral excellence and pure blessedness.

PART III
CRITICAL THEORIES

CHAPTER I

CRITICISM OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY BY STRAUSS

I.—Assumptions and Conclusions of Strauss

David Friedrich Strauss, whose name was made famous by the publication of his life of Jesus (Leben Jesu) in 1835, derived first of all from Schelling somewhat of an impulse in speculative thinking. As his references indicate, he was not a little impressed by the conception entertained by this philosopher respecting the incarnation as progressively accomplished in the human race, instead of being achieved once for all in an extraordinary personality. His thought was also directed by Schelling to that conception of the myth according to which it is not so much the product of conscious invention as the result of a pronounced inclination to the pictorial form, for the expression of truth, the form to which the mind naturally resorts at the stage where it finds difficulty in resting in the conceptual or ideal.[1]

Further on the philosophical premises of Strauss were largely shaped by contact with the Hegelian system. Quite manifestly he took from this system an emphatic conception of ideas as the great factors in history, the determining forces back of the chain of events, ever unfolding according to a law of inner necessity, and finding even in the greatest of personalities not so much masters as instruments. There is indication also that the Hegelian method of fusing contrasts into unity wrought to some extent upon his thinking. This appears in his remark that things which are approved to the higher phil-

[1] Streitschriften, 1837, Heft III, pp 65. 67; Leben Jesu, fourth ed., § 8.

osophical insight appear as absurdities to the understanding (Verstand), or the faculty which is tied up to abstract thinking. "That God is one with the world," he says, "and still different from it, that the will is free, and still implicated in the higher necessity of the world's development, that the evil is in itself the good, and yet antithetic thereto—these are absurdities for the understanding with its readiness to recognize here simply an *either, or,* and can be grasped only from the higher standpoint of the philosophically reborn."[1] As is intimated by the first clause in this citation, Strauss modified the conception of divine personality after the manner of Hegel, giving to that conception a pantheistic tinge, in so far as it is characteristic of pantheism to implicate God with the world or to make the latter necessary to the subsistence of the former. The speculative thinking of the age, he observes, represents that God has the character of self-conscious Spirit through a process of self-objectivation in the world and return into himself. He is not person alongside of or over other persons. The personality of God must not be thought of as single-personality, but as all-personality, and as such realized through a world-process. This does not mean that God attains completeness in time. "He is ever finished and perfect, but he is this only because and in so far as he has created from eternity and continues to create; his eternal ingoing into himself is conditioned upon his eternal outgoing from himself."[2] The point of view embraced in this phraseology is given, it is true, in the name of contemporary philosophy and speculative theology; but there is no reason to doubt that it was the point of view of Strauss himself. Up to the time of writing his Glaubenslehre he was in close affinity with the underlying con-

[1] Streitschriften, III. 23.

[2] Glaubenslehre, 1840–41, §§ 33, 48.

ceptions of the Hegelian system.[1] It would be going too far, however, to suppose that he was, or conceived himself to be, in complete accord with Hegel. We find him expressing the conviction that Hegel would not have approved his Leben Jesu, it being quite contrary to the mind of the philosopher to subject the great characters of antiquity to the gnawing-away action of critical doubts.[2] Furthermore, Strauss has noticed that Hegel in some of his references to Christology may be understood to concede that Christ exemplified the union of the divine and the human in a more special sense than he, for his part, was willing to acknowledge.[3] Again, he indicated his opinion that Hegel, at least as construed by his followers, was overtolerant of the notion of the possibility of miracles.[4]

From whatever sources Strauss had obtained his speculative outfit, he has made it evident that he came to the task of New Testament criticism with certain fixed philosophical presuppositions which could not fail to have a very decided effect upon the execution of that task. Among these presuppositions none was more confidently asserted than the impossibility of admitting that the divine efficiency ever is intruded into the creaturely sphere so as to work specific results in that sphere. Speaking of the laws universally governing events, Strauss remarks: "To these laws it belongs before all, that, in conformity as well with correct philosophical ideas as with all accredited experience, the absolute causality never breaks in upon the chain of conditioned causes in single acts, seeing that it rather manifests itself only in the production of finite causes and of their interworking."[5] The opposing view, which assumes a positive

[1] Compare Zeller, David Friedrich Strauss in his Life and Writings Eng. trans., pp. 71, 72. [2] Streitschriften, III. 61, 62.
[3] Ibid., III. 76–94. [4] Glaubenslehre, § 17. [5] Leben Jesu, § 16.

intervention or miraculous working, involves, he maintained, the inclosing of God in a temporal scheme. "A God who now, and then again at another time, works a miracle, who accordingly uses a certain kind of activity at one time and refrains from it at another, would be a being under subjection to time, and consequently no absolute being; the doing of God, therefore, is rather to be construed as an eternal act, which on its own side is simple and like to itself, and only on the side of the world appears as a series of divine acts following one after another."[1] With this speculative exclusion of the miracle Strauss coupled objections to the notion of special revelations in any form. "The acceptance," he claimed, "of an immanent relation between God and the world is incompatible with the theory of a special revelation. When all have a share in the revelation it cannot pertain exclusively to individuals."[2] In another connection he urged that a direct or supernatural revelation, while, on the one hand, it supposes an interference that is contradictory of the proper conception of the divine nature, on the other hand is in conflict with the legitimate notion of man. "A revelation," he said, "that is, an immediate working of the Highest Being upon the human spirit, leaves to the latter nothing but absolute passivity; for the Highest Being is absolutely active, but the necessary correlate of absolute activity is absolute passivity. It follows at once, then, from this side that the conception of revelation is an impossible one."[3] Thus Strauss started out with a speculative foreclosure against the ideas of miracle and special revelation. From the beginning to the end of his literary career he was dogmatically intolerant of these ideas.

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[1] Leben Jesu für das Deutsche Volk bearbeitet, 1864, § 24.
[2] Streitschriften, III. 47. [3] Glaubenslehre, § 19.

Another presupposition was entertained by Strauss with equal pertinacity, namely, that relative to the invalidity of the catholic theory of incarnation. That theory, he argued, wrongly supposes that the idea of the union of the human and the divine can be adequately realized in a single individual. "That is not the way in which the idea is realized, to pour all its fullness into one exemplar, and to deal parsimoniously with all the rest, to express itself perfectly in that one and ever in all the rest only imperfectly; but rather it loves to spread out its riches in a multiplicity of mutually supplementary exemplars, in the succession of individuals that posit and cancel one another."[1] No specimen of a class can by itself exemplify the ideal. "Could the species be realized fully in a single individual it would not take the trouble to break itself up into a plurality of individuals, and to run through a course of temporal development; but it would exist only in identity with that individual as a generic individual; just as God, if he could be immediately a single personality, would be relieved of the entire enormous apparatus of world-creation and world-history for the bringing forth of personalities."[2]

Harboring these presuppositions, Strauss had only to consider, as respects the supernatural elements in the Gospels, the most eligible way for disposing of them. In making choice here he felt obliged to repudiate for the most part the supposition of conscious invention or fraud. This method of accounting for the biblical marvels seemed to him to imply that religion is a matter for private manufacture, a kind of artificial device which a cunning schemer may fashion and attach to a people. To construe the matter thus, he held, is quite superficial and warped. Far from creating the religion of a people, the

[1] Leben Jesu, § 151. [2] Glaubenslehre, § 66.

individual representative is rather to be accounted the organ through which its more potent impulses and sentiments come to expression. In the true view it must be seen that the marvels of sacred history are not so much thrust upon a people as evolved out of its own inner life.[1] But how are they evolved? Does the poetizing faculty of the people take natural events and by an uncritical exaggerating rendering turn them into supernatural events, as was claimed by Paulus? No, replied Strauss; at least the major part of the explanation must be sought elsewhere. This naturalistic interpretation is discredited by the arbitrary shifts to which its exponents are forced to resort.[2] For many of the miracles of the Gospels it is impossible to find a probable historic basis, a substratum of fact which might be transmuted into a supernatural event under the action of a lively fancy. Large account must, therefore, be made of subjective agency, and the miracles recorded in the Gospels must be regarded as the product of the ideas which had gained lodgment in the religious consciousness of the people, the congenial forms under which the hoped-for and the expected were given a standing in the sphere of the real. In other words, the naturalistic explanation, if not entirely excluded, must be reduced to small dimensions, and the primacy be given to the mythical hypothesis, the theory of the creative working of ideas, whereby the subjective is made to take on the guise of objective history.

In his formal definition Strauss says: "We rate as gospel myths any narrative related directly or indirectly to Jesus, which is not, and in so far as it is not, to be accounted an expression of fact, but a precipitate of an idea of his earliest disciples."[3] In its pure form as he

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[1] Streitschriften, III. 41, 42.
[2] Leben Jesu, §§ 18, 28, 35, etc.
[3] Ibid., § 15.

goes on to state, the myth contains the whole substance of the narrative; in its modified form it is attached to a substratum of real history. The myth-making faculty which was operative in the gospel narratives was set to work first of all by Messianic expectation. As the Messiah was to crown the prophetical succession in which Moses stood, it was deemed necessary that he also should do mighty works. As the countenance of the great lawgiver was glorified by the divine presence, so it was deemed fitting that the Messiah should appear in a scene of transfiguration. Thus anticipation put its own fashion upon the Christ, wrought to make him seem to have been and to have done actually what was called for by the ideal of his office. As a second cause which contributed efficiently to the rise of myths, we have to note the extraordinary impression which was made by the personality, the working, and the fate of Jesus. From this source came both pure myths and mythical attachments to historic incidents.

Among the tests of the mythical, or, to speak somewhat more broadly, the unhistorical character of narratives, Strauss numbered the following: contravention of the laws which universally govern events; disagreement of a narrative with itself and with other narratives; discourse of a more poetic and elevated description than suits the actors or the situation; marked conformity between the content of a story and the views of the circle within which it originated.[1] By the first of these tests all accounts of supernatural or miraculous events were decisively excluded for Strauss himself, since it was a fixed postulate with him that miracles do not and cannot occur. Apart, then, from a wish to accommodate himself to the standpoint of others, he had very slight occasion

[1] Leben Jesu, § 16.

to apply any further tests to this order of events. But, as a matter of fact, he made large use of the discrepancies between the narratives of the several evangelists, as means of challenging their historical character.

The way in which Strauss applied his critical maxims and the conclusions which he drew, in long succession, on the pages of his Leben Jesu, gave his contemporaries the impression that his method was supremely adapted to turn the subject-matter of the Gospels into a set of dissolving views. Nor was this impression seriously at fault. While the critic did not assail the reliability of everything, he took no pains to point out and to emphasize the historical residuum. In this way he gave his readers occasion to think that his interest in the historicity of the Gospels was near the vanishing point. Moreover, he as much as asserted that he set very little store by the actual facts in the life of Jesus, that to him the matter for real concern was the religious ideas which by their efficient working had fashioned for themselves the forms of the supposed history. At the publication of his Leben Jesu he endeavored to excuse the destructive aspect of his work by declaring himself well affected toward the ideal significance of the gospel narratives, and by expressing a purpose to pay his debt to Christian dogmas by undertaking an elaboration of that significance.[1] But for this constructive effort he showed very little appetite. When his Christliche Glaubenslehre came forth (1840-41) it was found to be well suited to fulfill for Christian dogmas the same unfriendly office which the Leben Jesu had fulfilled for the gospel history. What was really aimed at in the later work was to show that the historical evolution had found its logical consummation in the disintegration of dogmas. Not even the tenets which

[1] Vorrede; also § 144.

the ordinary rationalism took under its protection were spared.[1]

In the controversial writings which Strauss issued, in response to strictures upon the method and results of his criticism, a somewhat better tribute was paid to the historical elements in the Gospels than the reader would be likely to discover in his primary work. Especially is this true of the Sendschreiben addressed by him to Ullmann, one of the most courteous of his opponents. He declares here that he regards the discourses of Jesus (reported in the Synoptical Gospels) as in the main faithfully transmitted, and that to a portion also of the deeds and fortunes ascribed to the hero of these writings he is ready to apply the titles "certain" or "credible." Relative to the person of Jesus he remarks: "To me also he is the greatest religious personality which history has brought to view. In his greatness, too, his natural endowment had, in my opinion, the largest share. . . . His power over the minds of men, with which very likely also a physical power of healing was combined, which we may explain somewhat after the analogy of magnetic force, effected cures which must appear as miracles. His standpoint at the highest height of religious self-consciousness was expressed in lofty sayings, even as his pure human sense was revealed in edifying, and his originality in ingenious, discourse. His fortune, like his person, was from the beginning to the end of his life extraordinary."[2]

In the second Life of Jesus—Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet—which Strauss published for popular circulation nearly thirty years after the first Life, he gave more specific attention to the demand for an estimate of sources. This part of his work, however, has

[1] Compare Zeller, Life and Writings of Strauss, p. 75; Hausrath, Strauss und die Theologie seiner Zeit, II. 16–31.

[2] Streitschriften, III. 145, 152, 153.

little significance, since he appropriated in the main the result of Baur's criticism. It will suffice to note that among the Synoptical Gospels he gave the preference to Matthew as respects originality and authority, and that he radically disparaged the historicity of the fourth Gospel, denying its apostolic authorship and its intent to give an objective statement of the facts of Christ's life. This was substantially his attitude toward the fourth Gospel from the start, except that he was temporarily inclined to a more favorable consideration, and permitted this phase in his thinking to color the third edition of the Leben Jesu. In the later work there was more of formal attention than in the preceding to the positive side of the life of Jesus; but to the one who was looking for a concrete and intelligible picture of the Master the gain could not appear very large. Moreover, such gratification as might have been experienced on this score was pretty well offset by the severer thrust which was now made at the gospel historians. As Strauss himself was careful to state, in the later Life of Jesus he took much larger account, than in the earlier Life, of the operation of conscious invention *bewusster und absichtlicher Dichtung* —in the production of the gospel stories.[1] It may be noticed also that, while in the earlier treatise Strauss deemed it not incredible that Jesus may have applied to himself the idea of preëxistence which is known to have been attached by Jewish thought to the Messiah not far from his time, in the later treatise the critic bluntly declared that one who should lay serious claim to a previous life, and to a knowledge of aught that transpired therein, would advertise himself for a fool if not for a deceiver.[2]

Two years before his death, which occurred in 1874,

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[1] See § 25.
[2] Leben Jesu, § 64; Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk, § 33.

Strauss thought it worth while to send forth another message to the German people. This bore the title, The Old Faith and the New, a Confession. As has been indicated in another connection, the *new faith* to which the veteran littérateur confessed adherence was that of a materialistic monism. What needs in particular to be noticed here is that in this closing manifesto Strauss took pains to brush away for the most part such grounds of confidence in our ability to reproduce the life of Jesus as he had left standing in his previous writings. He asserted that we know far too little respecting the Man of Nazareth to warrant the cherishing of any religious dependence upon him. "It is an idle notion," he said, "that by any kind of operation we could restore a natural and harmonious picture of a life and a human being from sources of information which, like the Gospels, have been adapted to suit a supernatural being, and distorted, moreover, by parties whose conceptions and interests conflicted with each other's. To check these we ought to possess information concerning the same life, compiled from a purely natural and common-sense point of view; and in this case we are not in possession of such. Every endeavor of the most recent delineators of the life of Jesus, however grandiloquently they may have come forward, and pretended to be enabled by our actual sources of information to depict a human development, a natural germination and growth of insight, a gradual expansion of Jesus's horizon, discloses the true character of their essays as apologetic devices devoid of all historical value. But not only does the manner of Jesus's development remain enveloped in impenetrable obscurity; it is by no means very apparent into what he developed and ultimately became. To mention only one more fact after all we have said, we cannot even be certain whether at the

last he did not lose his faith in himself and his mission. . . . The Jesus of history, of science, is only a problem; but a problem cannot be an object of worship, or a pattern by which to shape our lives."[1] This certainly is very frigid in tone compared with the following words in the closing paragraph of the Leben Jesu for the German people, written only eight years earlier: "Among those who have helped to perfect the ideal of humanity Jesus stands in any case in the first line. He has introduced into it features which before were wanting or had remained undeveloped; other features which stood in the way of its universal validity he has restricted; through the religious cast which he has imparted to it and through the incorporation of it with his own person he has given to it a higher consecration and the most living warmth; while the religious communion which emanated from him has procured for this ideal the widest dissemination among mankind."

The critical radicalism in which Strauss ended had been rivaled, not to say surpassed, soon after the publication of the first Leben Jesu, by a representative of the Hegelian left, Bruno Bauer. This eccentric critic differed from Strauss in denying that the Judaism antecedent to the rise of Christianity harbored any potent Messianic expectations. The Messiah, he contended, was the product of the Christian consciousness and was rather carried over from the Christian domain into Judaism than borrowed from the latter source.[2] As for the Gospels, Bruno Bauer was less disposed than Strauss to recognize in them an historical basis. Tradition, he said, was no real source of their subject-matter. All that they contain

[1] The Old Faith and the New, Eng. trans., § 28.
[2] Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker, 1841, Band I, Beilage.

—reputed deeds and discourses alike—was the offspring of free invention. The evangelists took various features or characteristics pertaining to the Christian brotherhood and to its situation in the world, and embodied these in the person and history of the one who was recognized as the founder of the brotherhood. They did this as individual writers, but yet as writers who were so far the exponents of the demands of the religious consciousness of the circle to which they belonged that they could not fail to find a cordial response. What we have, then, in the Gospels is not so much history, serving as a basis for dogmas, as dogmas or abstract conceptions turned into history. "We have shown," says Bauer in his estimate of his own critical achievement, "that all that which constitutes the historical Christ, what is said of him and what we know of him, belongs to the world of conception (Vorstellung), and indeed of Christian conception, and consequently has nothing to do with a man belonging to the real world."[1] Very naturally the excursions of this critic have rarely commanded the tribute of serious consideration. A criticism which, if it does not formally deny the existence of Jesus Christ, reduces him to the merest cipher, so far as any recognizable influence in the world is concerned, has outlawed itself in the sight of all sober judges.

II.—Grounds of Exception to the Criticism of Strauss

"The true criticism of dogma," Strauss has said, "is its history."[2] It would not be altogether unfair to apply a kindred maxim to his own critical performances, and to say that in their outcome a striking judgment upon

[1] Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker, § 91.
[2] Glaubenslehre, § 6.

them has been rendered. Of course, it would be arbitrary to assume that the great body of his critical work was immediately discredited by the plunge which he took in his latest years into the abyss of materialism and negation. Yet this dismal transition cannot be wholly put out of sight in the estimate which is to be formed of the competency of Strauss to deal successfully with the deeper problems which belong to the history and philosophy of religion. It may properly serve to raise a question as to the intellectual poise, comprehensiveness, and health of this would-be leader of the thought of his age. That he was highly gifted is not to be denied. He was keen in analyzing the matters that came under his review, and was the master of a clear and incisive style. But he was not a speculative mind of the larger mold, not a creative thinker. He was not broad enough to be secure against one-sidedness, and a veritable pathological element came to manifestation near the end. The eccentricity of his intellectual career taken as a whole, while it does not directly refute his theory of the gospel history, prepares us to find in it a deficit on the side of judicial balance.

The *a priori* exaggerating character of the treatment which Strauss applies to the Gospels is clearly manifest. As was noticed, he issued an uncompromising prohibition of all miracles and special revelations. Among the grounds urged for this dogmatic sentence the most plausible consists in the plea that any interference with the eternal order would bring God under the time category and would contradict his absoluteness. To this plea it is to be replied, as in the case of the Spencerian handling of the notion of the absolute, that it is a poor compliment to the absoluteness of God to suppose that it debars him from the prerogatives of free personality. Inability to

act outside of the given world scheme implies a falling short of the highest conceivable potency. We pass, then, under the constraint of a narrow definition of the absolute, and accept something less than the real absolute, when we deny to God the prerogative to act creatively, or to initiate a new series in the physical, moral, or intellectual world. Doubtless the adjustment of such action to the timeless life of God makes a puzzle for beings like ourselves who naturally think of events under the time category. But the puzzle is not peculiar to the supposition of miraculous agency. If the world is not at a perfect standstill, if it passes through actual transitions, how shall the all-seeing God not recognize the transitions? And is it any easier to suppose that intellect can recognize transitions without an experience of time, than it is to suppose that will can initiate new events without a like experience? Assuredly the former difficulty is on a level with the latter, and we must not only negate miracles and special revelations, but also all change and progress in the world, in order to protect God from the experience of time. If this is too much for our sanity, then very likely the best we can do is to suppose that things which to our view stand in a temporal order stand for God's contemplation and activity simply in a logical order. But in a logical order miracles and special revelations may find quite as congenial a place as any other events, namely, as antecedents to the perfect unfoldment of the kingdom of righteousness. That a logical order obtains in the divine sphere, Strauss himself assumed in declaring that God's ingoing into himself is conditioned upon his outgoing from himself.

The other objections that were mentioned require very little consideration. Manifestly we are assailed with purely verbal reasoning when we are asked to believe

that an immediate working of God upon the human spirit could reduce the latter to absolute passivity, since God is absolutely active, and the necessary correlate of absolute activity is absolute passivity. It is only necessary to ask, what is to prevent God from so wisely adjusting his action to the human spirit that this subject shall be at once both active and acted upon? The combination certainly is entirely conceivable. The God who knew enough to fashion the human spirit in all likelihood knows enough to be able to influence it without canceling its characteristic functions. With equal decision we may challenge the assumption of Strauss that an immanent relation between God and the world shuts out the fact or the possibility of special revelation. If God is so immanent in the world that he is swallowed up and lost in it, then, of course, the alleged result will follow. But if he is not thus swallowed up, if he retains directive intelligence, then it may suit his wise purpose to select some men to bear his message to others, and to these select agents he may make revelations that exceed in some respects those which fall to men generally.

In questioning the ideal character assigned to Jesus in Christian thought, Strauss, as was observed, denied that it is agreeable to the known order of the universe to suppose that the ideal should be adequately represented in an individual. To this contention it may be conceded that under the conditions of a special historical environment, and within the limits of a brief period, a complete illustration of the ideal of character on all sides could hardly occur. But this is not saying that the essential content of the ideal, the ideal as respects all cardinal excellencies, cannot be possessed and also exhibited within those limits. The contrary conclusion is the one which seems to be voiced by the accumulated evidence of the

centuries. The character of Jesus does not suffer in the least from comparison with the noblest personalities which investigation of the ethnic literatures has brought to light. As for those who have borne the badge of discipleship, the best in any one of them cannot soberly be rated as anything higher than an approximation to the ideal spirit in Jesus. Who stands in competition with him as respects tender, serene, and lofty union with the heavenly Father? Who can inspire anyone to improve on the model of loving service of men which is presented in him? Who has ever rivaled his combination of intolerance of sin with compassion for the sinner? Who has ever known how in equal degree to unite simplicity with grandeur? To take Jesus for the ideal means, in short, little else than to accept the historical demonstration. Men simply find it impossible out of all the resources furnished by the annals of the past to paint in the abstract an ideal which can take precedence of that which stands forth in concrete form in the gospel story. No theory about the necessary imperfection of the individual can be permitted to contradict the well-attested fact that in Jesus Christ the real and the ideal found their identity. The theory in question is but an induction from the ordinary, and cannot cover an instance that has superior claims to be regarded as unique.

It was noticed that in his final message Strauss spoke of Jesus as a mere problem. This language is not a little suggestive. Why should one who has so powerfully affected the course of history be accounted a perfectly unsolved problem? Is not such a conclusion a virtual judgment on the criticism of Strauss? A valid criticism surely ought to make of Jesus something better than a mere enigma. If this is the proper outcome of the paring-down process indulged in by the critic, that process

is very much in need of justification. Either Strauss was needlessly unkind to his own work, or the natural issue of his work was critical bankruptcy. In any case his course is suggestive of the difficulty of carrying negations so far as he did in his primary treatise without reducing Jesus to a mere enigma or unsolved problem.

With the disallowance of the presuppositions of Strauss much of the force of his attack upon the historicity of the Gospels is annulled. When once standing room is given to faith in an extraordinary person, and in the fulfillment by him of an extraordinary mission, there is such self-evidencing power in the gospel content that it mightily commends itself in spite of the discrepancies which appear in the records. Strauss overrates the damaging effect of these discrepancies. Men who are familiar with courts of justice, or with practical life in general, are well aware that in matters which have any degree of complexity even the most competent witnesses, however sure they may be of the main facts, will differ noticeably in respect of details. The general story of the evangelists, therefore, is not justly subject to challenge on the score of the variations in their reports. Indeed, there is a certain incongruity in admitting, so far as Strauss did for the greater part of his career as a critic, a faithful transmission of the discourses of Jesus, and at the same time questioning so largely the report of his doings. Minds that were retentive and honest enough to reproduce so well the spoken words might properly be trusted more fully, were not certain sweeping assumptions interposed, to give a substantially faithful account of the Master's deeds. In the particular way also in which Strauss disposed of the marvelous deeds there is a certain incongruity. Lively expectations of what the Messiah would do, he said, gave rise very largely to the

reports of the miracles. But, if the miracles were not actually wrought, how did it happen that the expectant minds were not turned away in chill and disappointment, and made hopelessly skeptical as to the identity of Jesus with the Messiah? Strauss supposes, indeed, that Jesus by a natural exercise of influence healed demoniacs. This, however, was a function which was not counted beyond the reach of contemporary exorcists. Had Jesus's demonstration of his power stopped at this point, had he not merely refused to respond to a captious demand for signs, but also, as Strauss avers, declined altogether to work marvels, he would rather have disappointed than satisfied the expectations entertained respecting the Messiah. To the extent of this disappointment the expectations would have wrought against faith in him and abridged the impression made by his personal attractions. Thus the explanation of the reputed miracles of Jesus through the force of Messianic expectations becomes very largely self-defeating.

CHAPTER II

CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BY BAUR

I.—Main Contentions of Baur

Ferdinand Christian Baur, who occupied the chair of historical theology at the University of Tübingen from 1826 to his death, in 1860, was one of the marked characters of the century in respect of scholarly ability and achievement. Though the senior of Strauss, in the history of criticism he naturally is placed subsequent to the author of the famous Leben Jesu, since a defect in the method of the latter served very largely to define for him his critical task. Strauss had failed to preface his treatment of the gospel history with a close scrutiny of the Gospels for the purpose of determining their inter-relations and the relative authority of each. This task of examining and rating documents Baur undertook with great energy to accomplish in relation not only to the Gospels but to the New Testament books in general. He considered that by this means alone can one gain an authentic picture of the way in which Christianity was developed from its primary content.

The presuppositions entertained by Baur, though not set forth by him very definitely, are commonly acknowledged to have been very much of a factor in the process of his criticism. In the shaping of them the Hegelian philosophy wrought conspicuously. From this source was borrowed a conception which was controlling in the early Tübingen criticism, the conception, namely, that the logical movement of thought includes in succession thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; in other words, that a

thought content is given first of all in simple immediateness, then is parted into antagonistic elements, then reaches a higher unity in the reconciliation of the elements. This point of view, if not formally paraded by Baur, was certainly exemplified in his work with a fidelity worthy of the most loyal Hegelian. He was also quite near to Hegel in his disposition to put the stress rather upon the intrinsic demands of the thought process than upon the directive force of uniquely endowed personalities.

Baur's affiliation with Hegelianism appears, furthermore, in his approximation to a pantheistic conception of God and of his relation to the universe. In a treatise on religious philosophy published in 1835 he gives a relatively full exposition of Hegel's notion of divine personality. He represents the philosopher as teaching that God attains to self-realization only by a process of incarnation in nature and in man, "that it is only the finite spirit in which the absolute Spirit determines itself to self-conscious Spirit." He mentions the objection that this view puts the personality of God in the mist, and so is poorly accommodated to the religious needs of men; but he declines to give any deciding weight to the objection. He declines also to find in the thought of a conditioned self-consciousness in God a serious stumbling-block. That thought, he observes, does not imply the limitation of divine self-consciousness to human history, since world-evolutions in an unending series may have preceded that which is known to us, and some class of beings may ever have been at hand in which the absolute Spirit could manifest itself under the form of finite spirit. The self-contemplation of God in the totality of finite spirits, he says, "is alone the true conception of the immanence of God in the world. Is one,

however, disposed to name this the logical pantheism of the Hegelian system, then very little regard needs to be paid to the mere name; the important thing being to show that there is any other satisfactory way of reconciling the equally valid claims of the speculative and of the Christian and religious interest."[1] From the tenor of this exposition it is sufficiently manifest that Baur was willing to accept as much pantheism as is implicit in the Hegelian idea of the divine Being. The notion of a transcendent Deity was quite foreign to his standpoint.[2]

In respect of Christology and miracles Baur's presuppositions were very much in line with those of Strauss. He may not have expressed himself on these themes in the categorical terms of his younger contemporary; but he gave adequate indications of his dogmatic preferences. For him the idea of the God-man was the idea of the unity of humanity in general with God. The peculiar eminence of Christ consisted in the fact that in him the unity of the divine and the human nature first attained to concrete reality, first became a matter of personal consciousness, so that it could be effectively expressed and taught.[3] As regards miracles, Baur does not, so far as we are aware, challenge outright their possibility. He notices, however, that the conception of miracle proper is not acceptable to religious philosophy.[4] He uses language that is naturally taken in the reverse of a complimentary sense when he says, speaking of the futility of an attempt to rationalize miracles, "the element of the miracle is precisely the contradiction which cuts off any further question."[5] Most significantly of

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[1] Die christliche Gnosis, oder die christliche Religions-philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung, pp. 700–706.

[2] Compare Siebert, Geschichte der neueren deutschen Philosophie seit Hegel, pp. 33–35. [3] Die christliche Gnosis, p. 717. [4] Ibid., p. 641.

[5] Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien, 1847 p. 225.

all, he disputes and excludes every miracle to which he awards a detailed consideration. In one connection, it is true, he gives a verbal acknowledgment to the fact of a psychological miracle in the conversion of Paul,[1] but in another connection he distinctly objects to the supposition of a miracle proper at this crisis of the apostle's experience.[2] On the whole, his attitude toward supernatural elements in the biblical narratives was scarcely more tolerant than that of Strauss.

In construing the New Testament history Baur has very little to say about the person of Christ. He supplies, indeed, some ground for the judgment that he considered the ideal Christ, or the Christ as he was pictured in the contemplation of the believing community, as being of more consequence than the actual historical Christ. The thought process leading on to catholic Christianity appears to have been to him the object of controlling interest. The life and teaching of Christ engaged his consideration only as supplying a certain basis for that process, and the process, in accordance with the movement of the idea in the Hegelian logic, was conceived to consist in the unfolding of antagonisms and in their ultimate reconciliation in some higher point of view.

Somewhat of a ground for antithetic types of thought was observed by Baur to have place in Jesus, inasmuch as on the one side his consciousness was of a universal ethico-religious cast, transcending national peculiarities, and on the other side was modified in its historic manifestation by the specifically Jewish conception of the Messiah. In the latter feature there was a bond to the old Jewish particularism. To throw off the restraint of this bond, to contemplate religion from any other than

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[1] Kirchengeschichte, third ed., I. 45.
[2] Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, second ed., I. 86.

the specifically Jewish standpoint, was not easy for those whose outlook from childhood had been entirely defined by a Jewish horizon. The earliest disciples were not equal to this task. Not one of the twelve conceived of the religion which they were called upon to propagate in the world according to the suggestions of the more universal elements in the consciousness of their Master. They represented him rather on the side of his connection with Judaism, and did not consider themselves under obligations to break away from the ancestral system. They were Judæo-Christians in thought and purpose, Jews who were looking for a second instead of a primary coming of the Messiah.

The element of universality in Christ's consciousness first found opportunity successfully to assert itself in the Christian community through Paul, though an incipient tendency to the broader standpoint was manifested by the protomartyr Stephen. In Paul's case, however, it seems not to have been through the contemplation of what was contained in the personal life of Jesus that he surmounted Jewish particularism. Rather, he reached that result by the path of inner experience. The way in which he came to the knowledge of salvation in Christ made him think of that salvation as antithetic to Jewish legalism. He was led to look upon Christ as the end of the law, and consequently the end of Jewish national limitations, a spiritual and universal power, the head of the religion of humanity. The revelation that the Father was pleased to make of the Son in him brought him to the standpoint of Christian universalism, which was implicit in the consciousness of Jesus but had failed to gain an adequate recognition from the older disciples.[1]

Thus the stage of antagonisms was introduced. The

[1] Kirchengeschichte, I. 45–48.

antagonisms, too, were very sharp and persistent. Paul became on principle the champion of evangelical freedom. He considered that nothing less than a sacrifice of the grace of Christ, a veritable betrayal of his religion, would be involved in an attempt to maintain the legal system of Judaism among the Gentiles. The Epistle to the Galatians shows how resolute and uncompromising he was upon this subject. In this epistle we have the authentic statement of his position from his own hand, and thus are shut up to the conclusion that he was perfectly unyielding in his opposition to the Judaizers, and that any writing which represents him as making concessions to their prejudices and prepossessions must be regarded as untrustworthy. On the other hand, the original apostles stubbornly maintained their adherence to a Judaizing platform. As the references of Paul show, during a period of fourteen years following his conversion they did not advance a step toward recognizing the independent and universal character of Christianity. The story of Peter's ministry to Cornelius and his household may seem to contradict this, but that story had its origin in an irenic intent rather than in actual history. Up to the conference at Jerusalem the original apostles had not caught a glimpse of the great truth that men could become Christians without first passing through the gateway of Judaism. They were behind those who disturbed Paul's congregations by urging that it was necessary to keep the law of Moses. Though at the conference at Jerusalem they gave the apostle the right hand of fellowship, they by no means became cordial supporters of his interpretation of the relation between Christianity and Judaism. The conduct of Peter at Antioch, in withdrawing from the table of the Gentiles, shows how little dependence he could place upon the concurrence of these

men in his plan of Christian evangelism. It was from them that the zealots who disturbed the Corinthian Church derived their letters of commendation. In the disturbances which led to Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, Jewish Christians, who had been under apostolic tuition, were in all probability co-agents with the infuriate disciples of the Pharisees.

And so the story runs on to the end of Paul's career. Nor did the antagonism to the great champion of Christian universalism cease to proclaim itself after he had finished his course. The apostolic author of the Apocalypse made a thrust at him in speaking of those who claimed a license to eat things offered to idols, and advertised still further his exclusion from the apostolic group by representing only twelve names as engraved upon the foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem. Even far into the second century the antipathy toward the apostle to the Gentiles came to manifestation. We may see it in the lack of reference to him on the part of Papias and Hegesippus. Still more distinctly we may see it on the pages of the Pseudo-Clementine writings, where Paul is reprobated in the person of Simon Magus, who very likely was a fictitious character devised on purpose to set off the faults of the late-born apostle.[1]

While the antagonism was yet in progress a movement in the direction of reconciliation was started. This went on with widening current into the second century. To its advance both parties contributed. The Judaizers began to retrench their demands, beginning with a relinquishment of circumcision, and carrying over to baptism much of the stress which they had placed upon the ancient rite. On the other side, the followers of the apostle to

[1] See Baur's Paulus, Kirchengeschichte, und Kritische Untersuchungen for the matter of this paragraph.

the Gentiles began to modify in one way or another the Pauline antithesis between the law and the gospel, between the old dispensation and the new. Thus a basis of unity was reached, and the sharp struggle of the primitive age passed gradually out of the sight and recollection of the Christian body.

The New Testament books, according to Baur and his immediate followers in the Tübingen school, reflect more or less distinctly the various stages of the movement just described. Most of them may be characterized as "tendency writings," having been composed in the interest of the Judaizing party, or of the Pauline party, or with the purpose of mediating between the two. Thus to a greater or less extent their subject-matter was the offspring of free construction. They represent more of design and less of unconscious evolution of myths than was assumed by Strauss. As to date, the majority of them were second century products. The earliest were the four epistles of Paul which are beyond challenge. A relatively early date is also to be assigned to the Apocalypse, a book credibly imputed to the apostle John.

Among the Gospels that of Matthew is to be regarded as the most primitive. It is also the most trustworthy. Its reports of Christ's discourses are substantially reliable. Matthew is strongly tinged with the Judaic way of thinking, but contains some tokens of a transcendence of Judaism. It may be characterized as a Jewish-Christian Gospel. On the other hand, Luke in its original form, which was at least approximately identical with Marcion's version,[1] was distinctly a Pauline composition. It contained tokens of a designed disparagement of the original apostles, notably in its representations respecting

[1] Compare Kritische Untersuchungen, pp. 395 ff. with Das Marcusevangelium, Anhang.

the seventy disciples whom Jesus is assumed to have sent forth as his messengers. Later, by the incorporation of Jewish elements, somewhat of a mixed character was given to Luke. The Gospel of Mark borrowed its contents from both Matthew and Luke, though much more largely from the former than from the latter. In tone it is less sharply defined than either of the two to which it owed its contents, and may be described as a mediating or neutral Gospel. The fourth Gospel is separated from the synoptical group by a wide chasm. Written late in the second century, after the mediating movement had in good part been accomplished, it represents Christian universalism from the standpoint of a speculative conception of Christ as the Logos, the principle of light and life in a world largely given over to blindness and insensibility. Its fundamental idea is "the divine greatness and glory of Jesus over against the unbelief of the Jews and in continuous conflict therewith."[1] The discourses which it purports to reproduce are not borrowed from history proper. They simply express the Christian consciousness of the writer, a consciousness, however, of so lofty a type that a lasting worth belongs to its deliverances. In the fashioning also of the narrative portions of the fourth Gospel a subjective interest was decidedly influential.

Among the other New Testament books the Apocalypse stands in closest affiliation with the Judaizing party. The Epistle of James is on one side anti-Pauline, as appears in its treatment of the subject of justification; but on another side it makes an approach to Paulinism, since it spiritualizes the conception of the law and makes no attempt to uphold the literal Mosaic code. Among the epistles ascribed to Paul the four which alone are entitled to bear his name—Galatians, Romans, First and Second

[1] Kritische Untersuchungen, p. 87.

Corinthians—represent the standpoint of energetic uncompromising opposition to Judaizing tenets and practices. The epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, while Pauline in substance, have a milder tone, and thus were suited to fulfill a mediating function. The late-appearing Pastoral Epistles represent also an attempt at mediation on a Pauline basis. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are confronted by a mediating writing which proceeds from a Jewish-Christian standpoint of a liberal, idealizing type. First Peter reflects also the age of synthesis or of vanishing antagonisms. As for the book of Acts, its reconciling purpose is stamped upon its whole content. In a radical sense it is to be accounted a "tendency writing." The first part of the book makes Peter as Pauline as possible, and the second part makes an industrious attempt to paint Paul in Petrine colors. So resolute is the writer in his purpose to maintain an even balance that he takes pains to parallel every great deed or marvel ascribed to one of the two apostles with an equally remarkable item in the story of the other.

Such in outline are the results which Baur reached in the prosecution of his critical undertaking. That undertaking was evidently worth while. It serves a genuine historical purpose to assign to the New Testament books their proper location in connection with the unfolding thought and life of early Christianity. Had the execution of the task been as normal as the task was legitimate, the Tübingen critic would have won extraordinary and lasting honors.

II.—Arbitrary and Extravagant Features in Baur's Criticism

The philosophical presuppositions of Baur were so nearly in line with those of Strauss that it would be

superfluous to give them any independent consideration. We may proceed at once, therefore, to deal with the basal assumption of his criticism, namely, the fact of an unmitigated and persistent antagonism within the apostolic group, a relentless conflict between Pauline universalism and the Jewish particularism intrenched in the minds and the hearts of the original apostles.

That an element of truth is contained in the assumption is not to be denied. Paul was undoubtedly a pioneer in the cause of Christian universalism; and it is equally indubitable that he encountered for a season a measure of resistance within the apostolic circle. But the unqualified and long-continued antagonism which Baur assumes is not to be admitted. The assumption of the critic runs into the incredible in the picture which it requires us to sketch of either party. It is far from being probable that in a complex transitional age Paul and his apostolic colleagues should have been embodiments respectively of a single idea or religious pattern in so radical, exclusive, and constant a way as the Tübingen theory supposes. Why should it be taken for granted that Paul was always in the tense mood which is reflected in an epistle like that to the Galatians, written at a great crisis and under stress of great provocation? As is made manifest in other writings, the apostle had tender feelings toward his own nation, and was most earnestly desirous to win them to faith in Christ. Why, then, should it be deemed incredible that he was ready to exercise some accommodation to Jewish prejudices in connections where this could be done without endangering the principle of the freedom of the Gentiles from the old legal yoke? He has himself testified: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I

might gain them that are under the law" (1 Cor. ix. 20). Surely, then, we are not required to suppose that he was such a walking abstraction that he could practice no sort of flexibility in adjusting himself to the varied requirements of a complex situation. On the other side, there is very slight demand for conceiving of the original apostles as stolidly fixed in a Judaizing scheme. It is natural to conclude that somewhat of a leavening influence came into their minds from the broad, unfettered spirit which was in their Master, and that this by its own virtue would gradually work toward a freer standpoint on their part. The action of this cause in such a direction is made especially credible when the conditions of the age are taken into account. These men had before their eyes a growing demonstration that Judaism was too narrow to hold the religion of which they were called to be the heralds. They saw this religion claiming even wider victories in the Gentile world, and could not well avoid having their thoughts broadened and liberalized by the new and stimulating events. To assume that they receded from the attitude toward Paul which they expressed at the Jerusalem conference in giving him the right hand of fellowship is to suppose them strangely impervious to the lessons of the age.

That Baur was importing, to a large extent, his own abstractions into the apostolic history is further made evident by the forced interpretation which he places upon various New Testament items, and by the judgment which he renders on one or another New Testament book. Take, for instance, his assumption that the Apocalypse gives a distinct evidence of John's intent to exclude Paul from the number of the apostles in its representation of just twelve names being inscribed upon the foundations of the walls of the New Jesusalem. How utterly gra-

tuitous is the assumption! In a symbolic book like the Apocalypse the Jewish preference for round numbers would infallibly operate for the selection of the number twelve to represent the apostolic group, even on the part of a writer who had not the slightest question about the apostolic standing of Paul. Take again the inference that Luke, as representing a Pauline platform, designed to disparage Peter by recording the statement that the apostle did not know what he was saying when he opened his lips at the close of the mystic scene of the transfiguration. Who but one controlled by a radical presupposition would see in this statement anything more than a simple intimation that Peter, speaking without premeditation and under the bewildering impression of the extraordinary situation, did not properly grasp the meaning of his words? Look also at the assumption that Luke's mention of a temporary mission of seventy disciples was dictated by a Pauline interest and was meant to cast a slight on the office of the twelve. What could be more gratuitous than the putting of such an intention into a narrative that describes simply an expedient adopted by Christ to prepare the people for his own speedy visitation and contains nothing at all to call up the thought of Paul's person or work? Still further, consider the allegation that the author of Acts was at pains to construct a detailed parallelism between the achievements of Peter and those of Paul so that the rival apostles might be glorified in equal degree. Even if it be supposed that the writer was morally capable of dealing so recklessly with the facts of history, it is in no wise probable that his common sense would dictate the need of such artificial biographical construction just for the sake of equalizing Petrine and Pauline claims; and, besides, it takes peculiar powers to discover a veritable parallelism of the kind and

extent which is pictured. Finally, take the ground on which the Pauline authorship of the little Epistle to Philemon is rejected. Baur is obliged to confess that, taken by itself, this epistle offers no good reason for challenging its genuineness. Why, then, does he make the challenge? Simply because Philemon reflects the same historical situation which is discoverable in the Epistle to the Colossians,[1] and so, in case its genuineness should be granted, is too favorable to the Pauline authorship of an important epistle which it does not suit the Tübingen scheme to acknowledge as Paul's. Judged by its spirit and content the Epistle to Philemon is one of the last specimens of literature in the world that one would care to number among the products of imitation or dishonest contrivance. Jülicher gives the verdict of sane criticism when he says, "Philemon belongs to the most certain property of the apostle"[2]; and Professor Ropes does not utter an extravagant judgment when he says, "The man who holds the Epistle to Philemon to be fictitious allegory has lived too much in the abstractions of eternity and not enough in the world of men to be a perfectly trustworthy critic."[3]

The one-sided and extravagant character of Baur's criticism is proclaimed in rather emphatic terms by the history of its fortunes. Even among those in the direct line of succession from the Tübingen professor it was not long able to maintain its ground. While Schwegler was quite as radical as Baur himself, and Zeller in the period of his theological activity represented substantially the same platform as his master, Albrecht Ritschl made a conspicuous departure from that platform. Before the death of its promulgator he published his dissent from the

[1] Paulus der Apostel Jesu Christi, II. 88, 89.
[2] Einleitung, fourth edition, p. 99.
[3] The Apostolic Age in the Light of Modern Criticism, p. 301.

fundamental contention respecting a radical and long-continued antagonism between a Petrine and a Pauline party.[1] Somewhat later another disciple, Adolf Hilgenfeld, expressed the conviction that Baur had gone too far in his emphasis upon antagonisms within the apostolic group and in his characterization of the New Testament books as "tendency writings."[2] A kindred judgment has been rendered by Otto Pfleiderer, who began his career as a teacher at Tübingen, and has always been known as a representative of the liberal school of criticism. Referring to Baur's disparagement of the book of Acts as being mainly a work of conscious invention, written for a mediating purpose, he says: "It is certainly much more probable that the author, possessed with the consciousness of his own time, in which Paulinism had in fact already become very different from what it was, apprehended in good faith the circumstances of the apostolic time also, and understood and honestly made use of his sources of information regarding it, with the presupposition that the relation of Jewish and heathen Christianity could have been no other in the time of primitive Christianity than it was in his own, namely, that of mutual approximation, agreement, and union of the more sober elements of both sides, in opposition to the extreme views of either party."[3]

In relation to a large proportion of the New Testament books the judgment of Baur has not been sustained by later scholarship. His theory of the interrelations of the Synoptical Gospels has been almost universally set aside, Mark being assigned the place of the most primitive instead of being reckoned the latest and most dependent. The late date ascribed to the fourth Gospel has

[1] Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche, 1850, second ed., 1857.
[2] Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in das neue Testament, 1875, pp. 197–199.
[3] Paulinism, Eng. trans., 1877, II. 230, 231.

been exchanged for an earlier one. Even those who question its Johannine authorship locate it, in most instances, within the first quarter of the second century. To Baur's short list of the genuine epistles of Paul additions have been made by nearly all critics. Hilgenfeld added First Thessalonians, Philemon, and Philippians. Pfleiderer admitted the same epistles, and in part also Second Thessalonians and Colossians; while critics as remote from bondage to traditionalism as Harnack and Jülicher have confessed the Pauline authorship of all these epistles, and have been tolerant, furthermore, of the supposition that Ephesians came from Paul's hand. In short, taken in its specific contentions, Baur's criticism is largely a fallen structure. In saying this, however, we have no intention to deny that the impulse received from him is still a factor in scholarship.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LIFE OF JESUS BY RENAN AND OTHERS

I.—Renan's Vie de Jesus

Ernest Renan had reached the age of forty when, in 1863, he published, under the title The Life of Jesus (Vie de Jésus), the first volume of a series on the "Origins of Christianity." In the six succeeding volumes of the series Christian history was carried forward, in close conjunction with the course of events in the Roman empire, to the age of Marcus Aurelius.[1] Eighteen years before the publication of the Life of Jesus, Renan in consequence of the discovery that he could no longer accept the Roman Catholic faith, had left the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, where he was preparing for the priesthood. In the interval between taking this step and the epochal year of 1863 he had given full expression to his essential platform in a number of writings, two of the more considerable of which were The Future of Science[2] and Studies in Religious History.[3] The former was withheld from publication till within two years of the author's death, which occurred in 1892. As a product of early zeal it contained some notions, especially in the direction of claiming a practical omnipotence for experimental science, which seemed to mature reflection to savor of extravagance. Still the book shows with a good degree

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[1] The titles of these volumes are as follows: Les Apôtres, 1866; Saint Paul, 1869; L'Antechrist, 1871; Les Evangiles et la Seconde Génération Chrétienne, 1877; L'Eglise Chrétienne, 1879; Marc Aurèle et la Fin du Monde Antique, 1882.

[2] L'Avenir de Science, 1848–49. [3] Etudes D'Histoire religieuse, 1857.

of fidelity the assumptions and ways of thinking which were controlling in the mind of its author throughout his literary career.

As the criticisms of Strauss and of Baur were shaped by very emphatic presuppositions, so also was that of Renan. The last, however, was distinguished from the German critics in that he was less closely affiliated with a specific philosophy. It would be going beyond the mark to say that he owned what might properly be called a philosophical system. The question of philosophical method was quite subordinate with him; he never made it the object of a particular examination.[1] While formally disparaging the office of metaphysics, he failed to practice the reserve logically involved in such an attitude, and employed metaphysical premises after the manner of the easy-going eclectic. He took what suited his bent from Kant, Hamilton, Comte, and Hegel. He sympathized with Kant's theory of the categories as the necessary molds of human conceptions, with Hamilton's views on the impossibility of construing God as the infinite and the absolute, with Comte's stress on the primacy of the empirical sciences as against the claims of all speculative philosophy, and with Hegel's idea of history as an ordered evolution in the progress of which the union of contraries has a prominent place. For the subtle dialectic of Hegel he had scanty appreciation; but with the underlying thought of Hegelianism respecting an all-embracing evolution he was quite in accord. With this thought he seems to have conjoined a vague monism.[2] In general an equivocal phase attaches to his treatment of the deeper themes. As several of his fellow-countrymen have pointed out, he made small account of

[1] Raoul Allier, La Philosophie d'Ernest Renan, p. 14.
[2] The Future of Science, Eng. trans., p. 89.

the demand for self-consistency.[1] His talents, in short, were rather those of the brilliant littérateur than of the profound thinker.

Among the characteristic features of Renan's thinking there were two which so far conditioned his critical work that they require special notice. The first of these may be defined as a compromising dealing with the subject of divine personality. If Renan did not squarely deny the proper theistic conception he certainly obscured and discounted that conception to a serious degree. In the first elaborate declaration of his faith as a freethinker he wrote: "Let us say that the Supreme Being is eminently possessed of all that is perfection; let us say that he has in him something analogous to intelligence, to liberty; but do not let us say that he is intelligent, that he is free: this would be trying to limit the infinite, to give a name to the ineffable."[2] In a later writing he seems to lean to the notion that such intelligence as may be attributed to the Supreme Being is more akin to instinct than to the cognitive function of self-conscious personality; for he makes his representative in the dialogue say: "The world evidently has an aim, and is steadily elaborating a mysterious work. There is a something which is developing itself by an internal necessity, by an unconscious instinct, in a manner analogous to the movement in plants toward water or the light, analogous to the blind effort of the embryo to leave the womb, or to that inner necessity which directs the metamorphoses of the insect."[3] Other statements of Renan look toward the same idea of God as a kind of

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[1] Séailles, Ernest Renan, Essai de Biographie Psychologique, pp. 192, 212, 242, 279; Bourdeau, Les Maitres de la Pensée Contemporaire, pp. 57, 67 Brunetière, Cinq Lettres sur Ernest Renan, pp. 20–22.

[2] The Future of Science, p. 449.

[3] Philosophical Dialogues and Fragments, Eng. trans., pp. 12, 13.

world-soul, working after a manner quite other than that of a self-conscious agent. Thus he remarks: "In order to be consistent, we ought to push anthropomorphism to its extreme limits and endow God with a body. . . . There never was such a thing as memory, foresight, the perception of external objects—in a word, consciousness—without a nervous system."[1] Again he says: "God does not see himself except in his incarnations."[2] Once more he approves the words of Strauss: "An absolute personality is nonsense, an absurd idea. God is not a person beside and above other persons." However, it would not suit his method to abide by so definite a position, and accordingly he adds: "If we make him impersonal, conscience protests, for we conceive existence only under a personal form, and to say that God is impersonal is tantamount, in our way of thinking, to saying that he does not exist. Of these two theories one is not true and the other is not false. Neither the one nor the other rests on a solid basis; both imply a contradiction."[3] This leaves the matter in a thick mist; but if the tenor of Renan's statements is considered it is manifest enough that his attitude toward the conception of divine personality was not friendly. That he stood at a vast remove from the plane of a warm theistic faith was evinced by the following words written late in life: "The whole of human development may be of no more consequence than the moss or lichen with which every moist surface is covered."[4] Such language obviously implies that the thought of a God who puts any value upon man or opens any door to real fellowship with himself may be a pure illusion.

The other element in Renan's thinking that calls for

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[1] Letter of 1862 in Philosophical Dialogues and Fragments, p. 138.
[2] Cited by Allier, La Philosophie D'Ernest Renan, p. 68.
[3] Letter of 1861 in Philosophical Dialogues and Fragments, pp. 176, 177
[4] The Future of Science, Preface of 1890.

special observation is little else than a corollary from the foregoing. A God who cannot be described as free and conscious personality, who is conceived simply as the immanent life of nature, possessed of the ability to view himself only in his incarnations, is plainly no credible source of supernatural workings. From postulating such a God it is but a logical step to pass on to the denial of the miraculous or supernatural. And this step Renan took with unwavering decision. From the time that he turned his back on the ancestral faith his mind was perfectly intolerant of the notion of miracle. His references to the subject constitute a string of dogmatic negations. The following are specimen statements taken in chronological order: "There is no such thing, so modern science teaches, as the supernatural. . . . The sole cure of this strange malady, which to the disgrace of civilization has not disappeared as yet from humanity, is modern culture. . . . Posterity will look upon those who are fighting supernaturalism in our days as we look upon those who fought against the belief in magic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."[1] "Criticism, whose first principle is that miracle has no more place in the tissue of human affairs than it has in the series of natural facts, evidently cannot fall in with the theological schools which employ a method opposed to its own. . . . Its essence is the denial of the supernatural."[2] "Till we have new light we shall maintain this principle of historical criticism, that a supernatural relation cannot be accepted as such, that it always implies credulity or imposture."[3] "It is an absolute rule of criticism to deny a place in history to narratives of miraculous circumstances."[4] "No trace

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[1] The Future of Science, pp. 40, 41.
[2] Studies of Religious History and Criticism, trans. by O. B. Frothingham, p. 42, 171. [3] Life of Jesus, introduction.
[4] The Apostles, Eng. trans., p. 37.

of the action of an intelligent hand, as interposing even for a moment to insert itself in the compact tissue of the world's affairs, has ever once been authentically verified."[1] "The negation of the supernatural has become an absolute dogma for every cultured spirit."[2] In face of such a list of declarations it amounts to very little for Renan to aver that he does not deny the possibility of miracles. He absolutely denies the fact of miracles, and furthermore shuts out all possible verification of the fact by the test upon which he insists. That test presumes that God may appropriately be called upon to crown the experimentation of a select commission with either an infallible affirmation or a negation of miracles.[3] As was indicated in another connection, this is by no means a temperate supposition. Who, in truth, has any right to assume that God will work miracles on demand, and especially that he will work them in answer to the challenge of unbelief? Is it not the plainest dictate of reason that not man's curiosity over theoretic issues, but God's judgment as to the exigencies of his kingdom, must decide the where and when of miraculous agency? Is it not also quite apparent that a reputed miracle, wrought under artificial and prearranged conditions, might be subject, in spite of all precautions, to graver suspicions than those pertaining normally to a reputed miracle which is congenially related to great moral ends and given the place of an harmonious factor in a unique chapter of sacred history? The proposed test of the critic is plainly outside the sphere of practicability, and it would be quite gratuitous to allow it to obscure the essential dogmatism of his sweeping denial of the supernatural.

Coinciding thus with Strauss in the total exclusion of

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[1] Philosophical Dialogues and Fragments, p. 8.
[2] Marcus Aurelius, Eng. trans., p. 367.
[3] Life of Jesus, introduction.

miracles, Renan was, of course, obliged to curtail the historicity of the Gospels much after the pattern of the German critic. He assumed, however, to proceed more conservatively in a number of respects. Strauss, he said, pushed the supposition of myth beyond reasonable bounds, underestimated the importance of the personal character of Jesus, made too much of the controlling influence of a preëxisting Messianic ideal, and took too little account of the efficacy of the marked traits of Jesus to modify that ideal.[1] He also objected to the late date which Strauss assigned to the Gospels. "The more I have reflected on it," he remarked, "the more I have been led to believe that the four texts received as canonical bring us very near to the age of Christ, if not in their last edition, at least in the documents that compose them. Pure products of the Palestinian Christianity, exempt from all Hellenic influence, full of the vivid and frank sense of Jerusalem, the Gospels are, in my opinion, an immediate echo of the reports of the first Christian generation."[2] This was written some years before the publication of the Vie de Jésus. A parallel utterance belonging to a later date appears in the following: "The Gospel was born amongst the family of Jesus, and up to a certain point is the work of his immediate disciples. This fact it is which gives us the right to believe that the image of Jesus, as portrayed in the Gospels, resembles the original in all essential particulars."[3] Relative to Mark's Gospel, Renan conceded that it is properly given a very intimate apostolic association. "The document, though composed after the death of Peter, was in a sense his work; it was the way in which he had been accustomed to relate the life of Jesus."[4] The Gospel of Matthew, in the judg-

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[1] Studies of Religious History, pp. 187–191. [2] Ibid., p. 195.
[3] The Gospels, p. 45. [4] Ibid., p. 59.

ment of Renan, presents a less faithful narrative than Mark, but has a great compensation in that it contains so largely the discourses of Jesus, "preserved with an extreme fidelity, and probably in the relative order in which they were first written."[1] In the third Gospel historical materials are handled with much freedom; but still we have here a token of close regard for the traditional form of Christ's discourses in the wide contrast which subsists between them and the discourses which Luke has recorded in the book of Acts.[2] As respects the fourth Gospel, Renan, while disparaging the trustworthiness of the discourses, took considerable account of the narrative portions. On the question of authorship he was somewhat wavering. In the preface to the thirteenth edition of the Vie de Jésus, written four years after the publication of the first edition, he expressed the conviction that he had been somewhat too favorable to the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, and that it can be attributed with better right to a Johannine school, existing at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century, than to the apostle John. At the same time he testified: "I persist in thinking that this Gospel possesses a value at bottom parallel to that of the Synoptical Gospels, and even superior at times." Later he returned to the supposition that John may have had some direct connection with the peculiar version of the life of Jesus which has been attributed to him. "We think now," he wrote, "that it is more probable that some part of the Gospel which bears the name of John may have been written by himself, or by one of his disciples during his lifetime. But we persist in believing that John had a manner of his own of telling the life of Jesus, a

[1] The Gospels, p. 111. Compare Life of Jesus, introduction.
[2] Ibid., p. 148.

manner very different from the narratives of Batanea [utilized by the Synoptists], superior in some respects, and in particular where the parts of the life of Jesus which were passed in Jerusalem afforded a larger development."[1] In the aggregate these comments on the Gospels seem to pay a rather emphatic tribute to their historicity. But the fact is not to be overlooked, on the other hand, that Renan was very free to hint at the fabulous character of the gospel contents. Quite as little is the fact to be overlooked that he licensed himself to cast slurs upon the sincerity of the actors who figure in the gospel stories, going in this respect much beyond the position taken by Strauss in his original Leben Jesu. His method is at times violently iconoclastic. On the whole, therefore, the practical impression fostered by his style of criticism is scarcely more favorable to faith in the gospel history than that which is derived from the revolutionary book of Strauss. His total elimination of the miraculous element involves by itself a serious mutilation of that history. Renan falls little short of confessing as much in saying, "If the miracle has any reality my book is a tissue of errors."[2]

A distinct characteristic of Renan's reconstructed biography of Jesus is the broad contrast drawn between the earlier and the later career of the founder of Christianity. In the former he figured as the clear-minded teacher, ardent and idealistic, but self-composed. His horizon was wholly that of Judaism. He was untouched by Hellenism, and knew next to nothing of the world at large. Within the circle of Judaism he was probably influenced not a little by the maxims of Hillel. To the Psalms his lyrical soul gave a ready response, and he

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[1] The Gospels, p. 220.
[2] Vie de Jésus, Preface to the thirteenth ed.

was much at home in the splendid dreams of Isaiah and Daniel. Without argumentative process he took up what these sources had to give. "Our hesitations, our doubts, never touched him." His disposition was harmoniously related to the delightful scenery of Galilee. A joy as of the bridegroom was in him. "The whole history of the birth of Christianity thus became a delightful pastoral."[1] Meanwhile there was an element in Jesus which transcended his antecedents and his surroundings. He had the most exalted consciousness of God that ever existed in the breast of humanity. "A lofty idea of divinity which he did not owe to Judaism, and which seems to have been entirely the creation of his great soul, was the foundation of all his power."[2] He looked to God as Father, and lived in the bosom of God by uninterrupted communication. The idea that he was the son of God, the intimate of his Father, "inhered in the very roots of his being."[3] With these deep elements of soul-life he combined the charm of a winsome appearance. His countenance was doubtless one of transporting beauty. There was a charm in his person and speech that was quite irresistible in its effect upon the friendly and artless people. "His preaching was sweet and gentle, full of nature and the perfume of the fields. . . . He traversed Galilee in a perpetual holiday. . . . The children and the women adored him."[4] The enchantment which those experienced who were admitted to companionship with him made them careless to register the passage of the weeks and the months. "None, during the course of this wonderful advent measured time any more than we measure a dream. Duration was suspended; a week was as a century. But whether it filled years or months, the dream was so beautiful that

[1] Life of Jesus, chap. iv. [2] Ibid., chap. v. [3] Ibid., chap. vii.
[4] Ibid., chaps. ix–xi.

humanity has since lived by it, and it is our consolation yet to welcome its diminished perfume."[1]

But a cloud passes over this idyllic scene. In his later career, as Renan pictures it, Jesus bears another mien than that of the serene prophet of Galilee who put the whole stress upon the ethical aspect of the kingdom of God and made it truly the kingdom of the meek and the lowly. He began to harbor the apocalyptic notion that the kingdom is to be ushered in by power, and is to gain ascendency by a sudden and revolutionary transformation of the world. In the estimate of his own nature and rank an element of exaggeration came to be entertained. "The admiration of his disciples overwhelmed him and carried him away. It is evident that the title Rabbi, with which he was at first content did not longer suffice; the title of prophet even, or of messenger of God, did not now respond to his idea. The position which he attributed to himself was that of a superhuman being, and he wished to be regarded as having a more elevated communion with God than other men."[2] He yielded also to the influence of his surroundings in becoming a thaumaturgist, or wonder-worker. While he felt the emptiness of public opinion in this matter, he did not greatly resist its pressure, so that "acts which would now be considered traits of illusion or of hallucination figured largely in his life."[3] In one single instance, the raising of Lazarus, there is ground for suspecting either that he himself was deceived by those who arranged the conditions of the pretended resurrection, or else that he condescended to be a partner in a deceiving spectacle. "His conscience," so Renan writes in this connection, "by the fault of men, and not by his own, had lost something of its primitive clearness. Desperate, pushed to extremities, he no longer

[1] Life of Jesus, chap. xi. [2] Ibid., chap. xv [3] Ibid., chap. xvi.

retained possession of himself. His mission imposed itself upon him and he obeyed the torrent."[1] Even before this strange episode, which preceded his crucifixion by a narrow interval, he had begun to make it manifest that he had undertaken a task too great for any actor upon the theater of a real world. The character which he had assumed could not long be sustained. "It was time that death should come to release him from a condition strained to excess, to deliver him from the impossibilities of a way without exit."[2]

It would naturally be supposed that in a mind thus prolific of disparagement the springs of eulogy would finally have been closed. But the case was quite otherwise. After all his thrusts at the practical balance and moral majesty of Jesus, Renan proceeds to extol him as the immortal leader of the race, destined to become, after the dark hours of sacrifice, the corner stone of humanity so entirely that to tear his name from this world would rend it to its foundations.[3] He declared him so far above the plane of the evangelists who undertook to report his words and deeds that it was impossible for them to do him justice. The transcendent worth and finality of his work he pictured in these strong terms: "His perfect idealism is the highest rule of unworldly and virtuous life. He has created the heaven of free souls, in which is found what we ask in vain on earth, the perfect nobility of the children of God, absolute purity, total abstraction from the contamination of the world; that freedom, in short, which material society shuts out as an impossibility, and which finds all its amplitude only in the domain of thought. The great master of those who take refuge in this ideal kingdom of God is Jesus still. He first proclaimed the kingdom of the spirit; he first said, at least

[1] Life of Jesus, chap. xxii. [2] Ibid., chap. xix. [3] Ibid., chap. xxv.

by his acts, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' The foundation of the true religion is indeed his work. After him there is nothing more but to develop and fructify."[1]

It was a very severe comment which Hausrath pronounced upon Renan's book when he said: "This Life of Jesus would be beautiful were not this Jesus there."[2] The comment is just. Renan has given us some fine scene-painting. He has vividly sketched some of the accessories of the life of Jesus. But for the hero of the story, as he stands forth in moral beauty and strength upon the theater of the gospel history, he has substituted an unfamiliar form. Who can recognize the Jesus whom he depicts? What heart of man can feel toward that Jesus an impulse of worship or trust? Crowned indeed he is with lavish praises. The praises, however, cannot suffice to recommend a subject characterized as, on the whole, he has been characterized. Never did eulogy ring more hollow than that with which Renan strews his pages. In spite of it all, the reader is left with the impression that he has produced not so much a description of the Son of Man as a defamation.

Giving attention to a few of the more obvious criticisms that may be brought forward, we notice, in the first place, the gratuitous character of an underlying assumption of Renan's attempt at biographical reconstruction. We do not mean his dogmatic fiat against miracles, though that might properly be adduced in this connection, but rather the strong contrast which he affects to find between the earlier and the later career of Jesus. Where is the warrant to be found for that contrast? Certainly not in the gospel narratives. There is

[1] Life of Jesus, chap. xxviii.
[2] David Friedrich Strauss und die Theologie seiner Zeit, II. 276.

no ground there for the highly colored picture which is given of Galilee as a fit theater for a perpetual holiday on the part of the young prophet and his intimates. As has been well said, "The Galileans were a comparatively rude and simple people; their country was more joyous and fruitful [than the Judæan region]; their cottage-life more sweet, peaceful, and idyllic; their habits in all respects more natural. But of a higher spiritual susceptibility, or a richer spiritual wisdom among them there is no trace. It was at Nazareth, where our Lord was brought up, that 'they rose up and thrust him out of the city.' It was of his native district that he said, 'A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.' It was of Capernaum, a town of Galilee, and Chorazin and Bethsaida, kindred villages, that he laments with such pathetic sadness, that they were utterly indifferent to his teaching. In Galilee were found, no doubt, the simple Shulamite, and the penitent Magdalene, and the good Joseph and Mary; but side by side there were also found the political schemer, the dark bigot, the fanatical enthusiast, no less than in Jerusalem. The same variations of natural character, with unimportant modifications, appear in both."[1] It was, in short, a mixed cup, compounded of joy and grief, which Jesus was compelled to drink in every part of his public ministry. The greatest bitterness may have been reserved for the closing scenes at Jerusalem and its neighborhood; but Renan in his picture of the long-drawn Galilean festival indulges in a mere fancy sketch. No more does he respect historical data in his representation of a radical change in the bearing of Jesus. That the Son of Mary, contrary to his earlier practice, allowed himself to be crowded into the role of a thaumaturgist is an unsupported assump-

[1] John Tulloch, Lectures on Renan's Vie de Jésus, 1864, pp. 176–178.

tion. The representation of the primitive biographies is that from the very beginning of his public ministry his benevolence and tender sympathy began to flow out in acts of healing. Equally void of all historic basis is the allegation that the inward harmony and the poise characteristic of his early career were wanting in the later. Never, according to the extant memorials, was he more completely master of himself and of the situation than in the closing epoch. In his silencing of cavilers, in his discourses to his disciples, in the dignity of the reserve which he maintained before accusers and judges, he exhibited as calm and worthy a lordship as he had ever manifested. In seeing the contrary the critic sees what has no basis in any historic record. When he says that "Jesus no longer retained possession of himself" he is simply drawing upon his own imagination for biographical materials.

In the second place, an element of radical incongruity must be charged against Renan's portrait of Jesus. Who can reconcile the two parts of the portrait? On the one hand is the pure and lofty Spirit whose intuition of the divine quite transcended the plane of Judaism, who dwelt in the bosom of the Father in uninterrupted communication, and who is worthy to be accorded the scepter of moral dominion over all the generations of mankind. On the other hand is the enthusiast who allows himself to be forced into an unworthy scheme of wonder-working, who forsakes the path of truth and sobriety in making exorbitant claims for himself, who grows desperate over threatened disaster to his impracticable program, and who needed to be saved from ending in a spectacle of impotency and defeat by the speedy intervention of a tragic death. The incongruity is glaring. To take both sides of the picture would require a faculty which may

have been resident in the French critic, but which makes no part of the ordinary mental constitution.

Finally, it must be said that an element of ethical shallowness and obliquity enters into this fanciful biography. It contains a strain of apology for acts that a clear and stanch moral sense must condemn. Observe the tone of the following: "He who takes humanity with its illusions, and seeks to act upon it and with it, cannot be blamed. Cæsar knew very well that he was not the son of Venus. France would not be what she is had she not believed for a thousand years in the sacred ampulla of Rheims. It is easy for us, impotent as we are, to call this falsehood, and, proud of our timid honesty, to treat with contempt the heroes who accepted under other conditions the battle of life. When we shall have done with our scruples what they did with their falsehoods, we shall have the right to be severe upon them."[1]

Brunetière gives a just estimate of Renan's Vie de Jésus where he says, "It is not history, but romance, or less and worse than romance."[2] More than one passage in the book may well incite one to accentuate the last clause in this statement.

II.—Schenkel's Sketch of the Character of Jesus

In 1863, the same year in which Renan published his Vie de Jésus, Daniel Schenkel (1813-85) sent forth his Charakterbild Jesu. His book, like that of the French author, was designed for popular use. In tone it was more moderate and reverent. No very pronounced influence of philosophical premises appears upon its pages. A doctrinaire phase is indeed observable; but this consists rather in the representation of Jesus as the champion of such a scheme of antidogmatic liberalism as was agree-

[1] Life of Jesus, chap. xv. [2] Cinq Lettres sur Ernest Renan, p. 80.

able to the thought of the biographer than in any peculiar postulates respecting God and the universe. So far as is discoverable, Schenkel proceeded from the standpoint of the ordinary theistic conception. The same may be said of Keim, whose more elaborate work on the life of Jesus was published a few years later.

In his view of the Gospels, Schenkel stood nearer to Renan than to the Tübingen school. Among the Synoptists he considered that Mark gives the life of Jesus in the purest objectivity. He supposed, however, that our Gospel of Mark was based on an earlier biography of Jesus, written at Rome by Mark before the year 60. Of this primitive document large use was made in the composition of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The fourth Gospel, as Schenkel conceived, cannot be referred to the direct authorship of the apostle John. Yet it may be credited with Johannine connections. It is probable that John lived at Ephesus to an advanced age. Here, under the stimulus of new conditions, his thought of Jesus and of his mission took on an elevated cast. Disciples appropriated his representations, and gave them such speculative coloring as was naturally imparted by minds in contact with the incoming Gnostic teaching. Thus the basis was prepared for the fourth Gospel, which appeared after the death of John, its date being the interval between 110 and 120. In portraying Jesus the evangelist has used large liberty in carrying back the standpoint of his own age. His composition, nevertheless, is a real source for the characterization of the founder of Christianity. While the Son of Man was not in the particular events and stages of his life just as he is pictured by the fourth evangelist, a true suggestion is still given by that evangelist as to what he was in the height and depth of his activity. To do justice to the eternal significance of his

personality we need to supplement the synoptical narratives by the portraiture contained in the fourth Gospel.[1]

A qualification on the historical character of all the Gospels is found, according to Schenkel, in stories of miraculous deeds. He affirms that we can form no proper conception of a miracle-working power which passes human measures. Applying this standard, he cuts off all the recorded nature miracles. These, he says, were doubtless reported in good faith. Fervent admiration for the Master combined with the influence of Old Testament narratives gave rise to tales of workings which belong rather to the province of omnipotence than to that of a finite personality. The only credible marvels ascribed to Jesus are the acts of healing which he is said to have performed. Apart from all supernatural intervention, a specially gifted personality, a man of ideal moral force, is able to elicit a mighty faith in those affected with bodily or mental ailments, and through this faith to work certain transformations in their behalf. So Jesus by virtue of extraordinary, yet purely human, endowments accomplished numerous works of healing. To the people of that time they were miracles; to us they are psychologically explainable. Being thus intolerant of the notion of miracle proper, Schenkel, of course, cannot admit the literal resurrection of Jesus. The appearances of the Crucified One he puts in a class with the disclosure of the Lord which was vouchsafed to Paul. Not a bodily resurrection, but continuous working in spirit, was the important thing. By his power over the company of his followers Jesus was shown to have truly escaped the bonds of death.

With intolerance for miracles Schenkel joined a pronounced antipathy for the catholic Christology. Indeed,

[1] Das Charakterbild Jesu, third ed., pp. 12–14, 17–26.

his ambition to antagonize that Christology was obviously among the motives which impelled him to write his book. He takes pains to make prominent his conviction that Jesus was in essence a purely human being. At the same time he places him far above the plane of ordinary manhood. He implies a conviction of his sinlessness by teaching that in his baptism Jesus confessed not his own sin, but the sin of the people with which he humbly associated himself and whose cause he made his own.[1] In very pronounced terms he affirms in the inner life of Jesus extraordinary factors. His consciousness of God was infinitely higher and deeper than that of the prophets.[2] He came to understand that in his person eternal truth in its original energy had given itself a new form, and that he was made the medium for instituting in creative efficiency a new beginning of life for mankind.[3]

A tribute to the incomparable greatness of the person and the work of Jesus is still further paid by Schenkel in the comments which he makes on the shortcomings of rationalism in dealing with this theme. "It has not done justice," he says, "either in a religious or historical respect to the sublimity and uniqueness of the character of Jesus. Not only does the rationalistic portraiture of Jesus leave the feeling cold, the imagination empty, the heart indifferent, but also the understanding in its deeper inquiries fails to conceive how this wise Rabbi of Nazareth, how this enlightened Jew, whose ambition to carry forward a work of enlightenment precipitated his crucifixion, through the wrath of priests and the envy of officials, came to found a world religion, and to prescribe for centuries its course to the whole stream of

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[1] Das Charakterbild Jesu, p. 33.
[2] Ibid., pp. 14, 15
[3] Ibid., pp. 66, 122.

advancing culture. To really believe upon the rationalistic Christ is impossible. His person is altogether transparent and intelligible to the understanding; only his working is beyond interpretation. For comprehending this there is wanting to the personality the original fellowship with the divine and infinite. The divine does not appear as present in that personality. It is simply supramundane, and, accordingly, no new revelation is introduced with Christ, no new creative beginning is posited in the history of the world."[1]

This is just criticism; but in rendering it Schenkel has unconsciously described a deficit in his own attempt to portray the Jesus of the Gospels. In spite of formal tributes, the general character of his delineations leaves the impression that it is not the Saviour known to the early Church and to the devout of the later centuries that he presents to us, but only a specially eminent religious hero. The formal tributes, too, naturally raise a question as to whether Schenkel does not make a miracle of the person of Jesus, and thus expose himself to the charge of inconsistency in excluding miracles. But the consideration of this point is properly postponed, since there will be occasion to raise the like question in connection with the biography of Jesus which is forthwith to claim our attention.

III.—Keim's History of Jesus

Theodor Keim (1825-78), who was a pupil of Baur but who advanced to a somewhat independent position, produced a critical biography of Jesus[2] which exceeded in bulk the very ample Leben Jesu of Strauss. In respect of standpoint he had a larger sympathy than Strauss

[1] Das Charakterbild Jesu, pp. 6, 7.
[2] Geschichte Jesu von Nazara, three vols., 1867–72.

with the inheritance of catholic convictions, and was disposed to render greater deference to the historical basis of the Gospels. Nevertheless, he did not keep his criticism free from a strain of *a priori* dogmatism. In various connections he seems to have consulted rather the demands of a preformed theory than any discoverable requirement of the historical data.

Keim followed the Tübingen school in giving the preference to the Gospel of Matthew. He concluded that this, in its original form, dates from about the year 68, and that additions of comparatively small compass were made near the end of the century. To this primitive Matthew, he says, a good degree of historic credibility belongs. "The discourses of Jesus in particular bear along with time-marks signs of a unique originality, of a masterful nature, of a divine consecration and might, to such a degree that even the single word, as being clothed with an antique drapery that was soon lost in the Church, wears the stamp of a spirit whom no follower, no evangelist, Jewish or Gentile, and also not even a Paul could invent."[1] Matthew in its original form served as one of the sources for the third Gospel, which was written by a moderate representative of Paulinism a considerable interval after the destruction of Jerusalem. The Gospel of Mark was regarded by Keim as dependent on both Matthew and Luke. At first he placed it about the year 100; later he was inclined to locate it between 115 and 120.[2] In a similar manner he shifted the date for the composition of the fourth Gospel. It was placed as early as from 110 to 117 in the first volume of the larger biography of Jesus; in the shorter biography, on the other hand, it was assigned to the interval between 130 and

[1] Geschichte Jesu von Nazara, I. 64.
[2] Geschichte Jesu übersichtlich erzählt, third ed., 1875, p. 36.

135. As respects the historical worth of this Gospel, the estimate of Keim was exceedingly disparaging. He can hardly be said to have expressed himself in as appreciative terms as did Schenkel.

While persistently adhering to his original theory on the interrelation of the Synoptical Gospels, Keim was aware that the current of New Testament criticism had set strongly against that theory. Judged by the broad consensus of recent scholarship in favor of the priority of Mark's Gospel, he must be pronounced quite unfortunate in a prominent part of his critical presuppositions.

Keim expresses the opinion that in dealing with a personality like Jesus, who so greatly transcended the measure of his time and of all times, it is not legitimate to dispose of the question of miracles by the summary and easy-going method of Strauss.[1] Nevertheless, his own dealing with this question approximates to that of his radical predecessor. In his view misinterpretation of the words of Jesus, magnifying of simple incidents under the impulse of a boundless admiration, and readiness to paint a beloved Master after the pattern and deeds of the greatest characters of the Old Testament, explain many of the stories of miraculous doings. For the reports of the nature miracles no more substantial sources than these are to be recognized. On the other hand, a very considerable proportion of the acts of healing, whether wrought in relation to the physically afflicted or in relation to the so-called demoniacs—in other words, the mentally afflicted—are deserving of credence. The way in which these acts are described invites to confidence. "It is the genuinely historical Jesus, who here in compassionate response to need performs his deeds, there reluctantly exercises his power over the might of evil, who resorts

[1] Geschichte Jesu von Nazara, I. 65, 66.

under compulsion to the healing office, who works on principle with the spiritual word and desires spiritual faith, and who finally imposes silence upon the healed. That is a kind of Jesus such as the sensuous appetite for marvels belonging to the time could scarcely have invented."[1] The ground of the ability to perform these works resided in the spiritual life of Jesus, in his power of will, confidence, and compassion. A supplementary ground was supplied by the faith of those for whom the beneficent works were performed. "The decisive power lay manifestly in the combined outburst of the faith [*Glaubenssturm*] of the sick and of the healer."[2]

On the subject of the resurrection of Jesus, Keim championed a theory which may be regarded as a compromise between the catholic affirmation of a real bodily resurrection and the assumption of Renan and others that the appearances of the one who had gone to the cross and the tomb were mere subjective appearances. Keim granted, indeed, that the appearances came through the medium of visions, but maintained at the same time that these had an objective ground in the activity of Jesus, who in this way made himself manifest to his followers.[3] An extraordinary psychical working is thus made to take the place of the physical miracle.

Though denying the supernatural conception and the preëxistence of Jesus, and defining him as in essence purely human, Keim hardly stops short of a worshipful eulogy in the tribute which he pays to him. He accepts the fact of his sinlessness, and declares that this by itself puts him above the category of the mere religious genius. Any small infirmities, he says, which may be thought to have been manifested by Jesus were not real sins, but only natural incidents of the human constitution in Jesus and

[1] Geschichte Jesu von Nazara, II. 141. [2] Ibid., II. 155. [3] Ibid., III. 600–603.

of the historical situation. As regards the hidden life of his earlier years, we can reason back to its exemption from the stain of transgression. The one who in his sinless manhood felt no smart over his past record must have been distinguished by a blameless youth. And in respect of positive endowments Jesus stands equally above the ordinary level. In the characteristics of his inner life and in his historical significance he is without parallel. He represents a new stage in the development of the human spirit. In his person a divine miracle (*das Wunder Gottes*) is disclosed. The spirit of sonship came to perfection in him, and he had in full measure that sense of human dignity and of divine love which exists in others in marred and fragmentary form. He stands for a new creation in humanity, a completion of the divine image. He is the divine man in whom the striving of God after complete manifestation and the restless struggle of man to grasp God came to a satisfying result. He exemplifies the highest attainable stage of the inner union of God and man, and one is merely giving place to an unworthy and impertinent dream when he supposes it possible for another to surpass Jesus in achievement and personality. In his transcendence of the conditions of his time and the characteristics of his contemporaries he makes the impression of a mysterious uniqueness, a superhuman marvel, a divine creation. To view his person is to view not merely a work among many works of God, but the most peculiar work, the specific revelation of God. In harmony with his extraordinary standing he attributes, even in the face of seeming downfall, eternal validity to his own person and cause. He is the basis of rest and the spring of motion in the history of the world, the creator of a new higher cosmos whose days are reckoned by millenniums. Even his opponents,

in so far as they strive for the worthy, are compelled to fight under the banner of the man who, after the fashion of God, called out of nothingness, as no other beside him has done, a world of life.[1]

In view of his estimate of the person of Jesus, Keim —and also Schenkel in a somewhat less emphatic sense— may be said to have set the door ajar for a return to an essentially catholic standpoint. If one is to admit so great a miracle in human history as Jesus is made out to have been, why should real miracles be treated with so much incredulity? Whence comes the assurance that the incomparable person, in the fulfillment of an unparalleled mission, did not perform deeds of superhuman might? Why cut out this work, and that and the other—which are properly subordinated to ethical ends and which fit harmoniously into narratives that fulfill a great didactic purpose? We submit that Keim's conception of the person of Jesus provides a rational basis for a larger tolerance than that which he has awarded to the narratives of miracles in the Gospels.

In relation to Christological theory, also, Keim's estimate of Jesus may be regarded as affording an apologetic ground for the catholic belief. The altogether exceptional personality and life of this wonderful benefactor of the race call for an explanation. Is it certain that any better explanation can be found than the assumption of a special bond between Jesus and the divine? And, if a special bond is to be assumed, is it certain that we can do better than to regard Jesus as the expression in time of the eternally filial, as has been claimed in catholic thinking? A manifest ground for taking this course lies in the New Testament content. Anyone who assigns to

[1] Geschichte Jesu von Nazara, I. 1, 6, 360, 447–449; II. 575; III. 219, 649–667.

Jesus the lofty character and mission depicted by Keim must contemn the notion that he came by accident, and must insist that here, more certainly and grandly than at any other point of history, the providence of God is made manifest. Now, what else than a consistent supplement to the providence which furnished Jesus can we find in the providence which is adapted to afford a substantially authentic interpretation of his person and mission? Evidently it is favorable to the conservation of congruity in divine procedure to suppose that divine illumination was efficiently operative in producing that picture of the sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ which is set before us in the more constructive portions of the New Testament.

CHAPTER IV

ELEMENTS OF RADICALISM IN THE RECENT CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

I.—Views Relative to the Stories of the Patriarchs

In the opinion of a large proportion of scholars the modern movement in biblical criticism has legitimated very considerable departures from the traditional conceptions of Old Testament books and institutions. The theory that large portions of the Pentateuch were of post-Mosaic origin, which seemed, as it was voiced in the seventeenth century by Hobbes, Peyrère, Spinoza, and Simon, to be a rash and unwarrantable speculation, has claimed extensive acceptance. The documentary hypothesis which Astruc in the eighteenth century applied to Genesis, and which claimed the approval of Michaelis and Eichhorn, was given a much wider application in the nineteenth century by a succession of scholars, among whom a conspicuous place was occupied by De Wette, Ewald, Vatke, Reuss, and Graf. The distinctive thesis of the last mentioned, whose treatise on The Historical Books of the Old Testament appeared in 1866, was the late origin of the priestly legislation embodied in the middle books of the Pentateuch. The same thesis, which locates this legislation in its literary form within exilian or post-exilian times, was earnestly championed by Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others, and thus came to be ranked in the closing years of the century as a characteristic feature of Old Testament criticism. Meanwhile revised views on other portions of the Old Testament, notably on the books of Isaiah and Daniel, obtained large currency.

Extent of acceptance is doubtless no infallible measure of the merits of critical theories. Still, when we consider the large number of scholars, whose temper is neither iconoclastic nor anti-evangelical, with whom certain cardinal contentions of the newer criticism have become matters of assured conviction, we seem in all sobriety to be debarred from rating these contentions as being in themselves specific manifestations of *radicalism*. Consequently as here used that term has a less extensive scope than has often been given to it by the advocate of the strict traditional standpoint. Without attempting to decide just how much of the recent criticism of the Old Testament has valid claims to tolerance or approval, we make note of various conclusions which seem to us to involve gratuitous disparagement of the Hebrew oracles, and to be the product rather of a doctrinaire temper than of a sober historical judgment.

First among these conclusions is that which denies that the narratives of the patriarchal progenitors of Israel contain anything of the character of real personal history. On two different grounds this negative proposition has been put forth: first, on the ground that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., are to be regarded as personifications of tribes, being the forms under which later generations pictured the lost beginnings of the national antecedents; secondly, on the ground that what is given under these titles is in substance nothing but a group of myths relative to the sky and its orbs.

The former method of negating the historicity of the patriarchal narratives is the one which claims the larger currency in the ranks of Old Testament critics. Use is made of it, for instance, by Kuenen. "The 'sons of Israel,'" he says, "who penetrated into Canaan under Joshua formed a union or bond of twelve kindred tribes.

For the present we will pass over the question how that bond originated. Once in existence, it led to the idea that the twelve tribes—just as each separately had sprung from one father—were collectively children of one ancestor. . . . In short, the tribes were regarded and treated as individuals, and were transferred to the house of their common father in the same mutual relation in which they actually stood to each other. . . . Of course, we do not hesitate to apply also to the rest of the patriarchs the interpretation which we have proposed for Jacob and his sons. As progenitors of tribes—and it is in this character that they appear in Genesis—they too are not persons, but personifications. . . . Of course, in the abstract, it is possible that such persons as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should have existed. . . . But our present investigation does not concern the question whether there existed men of those names, but whether the progenitors of Israel, and of the neighboring nations who are represented in Genesis, are historical personages. It is this question which we answer in the negative."[1]

The same scheme of interpretation is adopted by Wellhausen. In his view the stories of the forefathers in Genesis proceeded from the ethnological relations and arrangements of worship of the time of the kings, being the representations with which the story-tellers and writers of that age, borrowing from their own surroundings, filled up the empty canvas beyond the Mosaic period.[2] The stories are not pure myths; but such facts as they may embrace belong rather to national or tribal history than to that of individuals. "The Leah tribes were comprehended with the Rachel tribes under the common father Jacob-Israel; then entire Israel with the

[1] The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State, trans. by A. H. May, I. 111–113.

[2] Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, second edition, p. 11.

people of Edom under the old name Isaac; further, Isaac with Lot, the father of Moab and Ammon, under Abraham. . . . The historical succession and juxtaposition conform to the method of logical or statistical subordination and coördination; in reality the elements are commonly older than the groups, and the smaller groups older than the larger." Thus Abraham is the youngest figure in the series, and probably was prefixed to Isaac at a comparatively late date. Abraham, it is true, is not known to have been the name of a tribe or people. But that affords no suitable warrant for regarding him as an historical person; "sooner he might be esteemed the free creation of spontaneous poetizing."[1]

Stade is equally pronounced in denying to the patriarchs the character of historical persons, and decides that the representation of their sojourn in the country west of the Jordan is without any good basis in fact.[2] The thoroughly legendary character of the Genesis narratives is also affirmed by Smend. "The history of the forefathers," he maintains, "is only an ideal prefiguration of the history of Israel, and the intercourse of Jahve with the forefathers is only an expression of the faith that his grace was already operative in the first beginnings of Israel."[3]

As a representative of those who see in the patriarchal history, above all else, a set of myths relating to the sky and its orbs, we may mention Goldziher. "Originally," he says, "the names of the patriarchs and the actions which are told of them signified nothing historical, but only something in the domain of nature. The names are appellations of physical phenomena, and the actions are

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[1] Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels, second edition, pp. 336–338.
[2] Geschichte des Volkes Israel, I. 127; Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments, § 22.
[3] Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte, p. 12.

actions of nature."[1] The way in which Goldziher applies this exegetical canon may be observed in the following sentences: "We see in the myths of Abraham and of Jephthah the two sides of the same idea, each having its peculiar form and frame: the former tells of the victory of the night, the dark sky of night, over the sun; the latter of that of the dawn over the shades of night. . . . One of the most conspicuous names of the dark sky of night or clouds in the Hebrew mythology, and containing a rich fund of mythical matter, is Jacob. . . . Both Esau and Laban are solar figures. What we learn of them in the epic treatment of the old myth found in the Old Testament presents a multitude of solar characteristics. We especially note this in Esau, whose heel Jacob grasps at their birth. This mythical expression is clear enough. Night comes into the world with day's heel in his hand, or, as we should say, Night follows close upon day, driving him from his place."[2]

Winckler resorts in ample measure to a similar line of interpretation in his radical curtailment of the historicity of the biblical narratives up to the accounts of the early kings of Israel. On the one hand, it is true, he supposes that these narratives were born of the tendency of a relatively late age to depict the past after the pattern of its own conditions, a procedure which was patronized with special industry by David and the writers of his court under the pressure of a political exigency. But, on the other hand, he supposes Babylonian mythology and astrology to have been a potent factor in shaping the narratives in question.[3] Abraham when placed in conjunction with Lot reduces in his interpretation to one of the

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[1] Mythology Among the Hebrews and its Historical Development, trans. by R. Martineau, p. 18. [2] Pages 104, 133, 134.

[3] Geschichte Israels. Die Keilinschriften und das alte Testament, 3te aufl. von E. Schrader, neu bearbeitet von H. Zimmern und E. Winckler.

Dioscuri. As the husband of Sarah, who stands for Ishtar, he is identified with Tammuz, and thus is associated with the moon god Sin, the father of Tammuz and Ishtar. Jacob also bears the character of a moon divinity, only as the father of twelve sons he is connected rather with the completion of the year than with the month. Stucken is at one with Winckler in his disposition to read into the early history of Israel a set of myths derived from star-worshiping Babylonia. He is minded, however, to construe Abraham as primarily representing Orion, and Sarah as standing for Sirius.[1] Zimmern, while admitting that some of the points made by Winckler, in his endeavor to detect lunar, solar, or stellar myths in the stories of the forefathers, are untenable, still holds that his work in that direction is quite legitimate and in various points successful."[2]

Evidently the two theories for explaining the content of the patriarchal narratives, if taken in a radical sense, are not compatible each with the other. If the fundamental motive in the construction of these narratives was supplied by ethnological conditions, then it was not furnished by a vivid impression of solar, lunar, or stellar phenomena. If the narratives are in essence personifications of tribal facts, then they are not in essence astral myths. Place can logically be made for either theory only by reduction of emphasis upon the other. As respects the relative merits of the two, the weight of scholarship and the demands of sober thinking alike, as it seems to us, award the preference to the former. It makes by far too great a strain upon a reasonable faith to ask one to believe that the most vital factors in the na-

[1] Astralmythen der Hebraer, Babylonier und Aegypter.
[2] Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament, p. 365.

tional and religious consciousness of a people had nothing to do with a real historical evolution, an actual national drama, but were simply translations into other terms of facts open to the common gaze of men on the face of the sky. To suppose that the Israelites, to the neglect of all reminiscence of their own past, engrossed themselves in a play with mythological phantoms is to suppose that they were veritably a moonstruck people. Then, too, how closely it borders on the grotesque to assume any sort of connection between various passages in the patriarchal stories and the alternating appearances of day and night, of sun and moon, of clear sky and clouds. When the mythologist asks us to see in the description of the relations between Sarah and Hagar a figurative representation of the rivalry between the moon and the sun, we are inclined to ask him what there is to prevent an unfelicitous item, which may chance to find a place in his own domestic annals, from being interpreted in the same way. Positive disproof of his peculiar exegesis may not be easy; but there is scanty need of such disproof. Its own fancifulness and artificiality may safely be trusted to limit very decidedly the patronage awarded to his scheme of interpretation.

The ethnological theory, which supposes that under the names of the patriarchs of Israel the tribes, out of which the nations of later times grew, were pictured in their inferred characteristics and relations, has its most plausible ground in the fact that in the early biblical lists a close discrimination between individuals and tribes or peoples seems not to have been observed. In the tenth chapter of Genesis, for example, nations are mentioned as individuals, and on the other hand the individual Nimrod is placed in relation to one of them, namely Cush, as a son. But too much is not to be made out of instances

like these. The failure to discriminate verbally between the tribe and the individual in a passing reference is quite a different thing from treating a tribe as an individual throughout the details of an extended narrative. The proof that a biblical writer could proceed in the former way is far from conclusive evidence that he was capable of proceeding in the latter way.

Quite as inconclusive is another ground which has been urged for the ethnological theory. The Israelitish conception of the patriarchal history, says the advocate of that theory, goes on the supposition that nations or tribes come into being by the growth of a family which had its beginning in a single ancestor. This supposition, it is claimed, is baseless. "It is quite certain," writes Kuenen, "that, although it is not entirely supposititious, this theory of the origin of nations is not the true one. Families become tribes, and eventually nations, not only, nor even chiefly, by multiplying, but also, nay, principally, by combination with the inhabitants of some district, by the subjection of the weaker to the stronger, by the gradual blending together of sometimes very heterogeneous elements."[1] The trouble with this pronouncement is that it takes too little account of varying conditions. Where causes, whether social, moral, or physical, conduce to a relative isolation it is quite possible that for a considerable period family expansion should be the principal means of approach to tribal or national dimensions. That Israel in its early stages grew principally—it is not necessary to say exclusively—in this way is quite conceivable, and is not to be summarily denied on the score of a sweeping postulate as to historic process.

The theory under review, it should be observed, would not be justified by the discovery that one or another

[1] The Religion of Israel, I. 110.

item appropriate to a tribe had been associated by the biblical writer with the name of a patriarch. Not to mention the fact of possible similarities between the character and position of an individual and of the tribe emanating from him, it is quite conceivable that, in his attempt to picture the remote historical individual, the sacred writer might blend with matter properly descriptive of the individual something which was primarily suggested by tribal or national facts. Indeed, there are scholars who, while they contend that the Israelitish patriarchs were actual persons, still are disposed to admit that the narratives about them in the Bible were colored to some extent by ethnological data in the mind of the narrator.[1]

Positive objections to the scheme which excludes patriarchal individuals in favor of tribes are not wanting. In the first place, it is not known that the names of some of these reputed individuals were employed as a customary or even exceptional designation of a tribe. This is true of the head of the patriarchal list. As was noticed above, Wellhausen confesses as much, and knows not how better to dispose of Abraham than to classify him as the product of spontaneous poetizing.

Again, if in the early and continuous tradition of Israel no reference was made to great personalities back of Moses their intrusion upon the theater of the national history by a late generation needs to be explained. We may say with Driver, "Why, unless there had been positive historical recollections forbidding it to do so, did not Israelite tradition concentrate all the glory of founding the national Church and State upon Moses? If, in spite of the great deliverance undoubtedly achieved by Moses, Israelitish tradition nevertheless goes back beyond Moses, and finds

[1] Ryle, article "Abraham" in Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, I. 15, 16.

in the patriarchs the first roots not only of the possession of the land, but also of the people's higher worship of God, this can only be reasonably accounted for by the assumption that memory had retained a hold of the actual course of events."[1] The high importance claimed by the patriarchs in the national consciousness is, in truth, a pretty cogent evidence on the side of the belief that they were not mere products of artificial construction. No lengthy discourse, it is true, is expended upon them by the prophets; but they are introduced in a way which presumes upon a common recognition of their lofty standing and function. Even the earliest of the literary prophets have recorded indubitable references to Isaac and Jacob,[2] and both of these are coupled in Deuteronomy with Abraham,[3] who further is mentioned by the elder Isaiah,[4] by Micah,[5] by Jeremiah,[6] by Ezekiel,[7] and by the later Isaiah.[8] Some of these references may have been denied by various critics to the writers under whose names they are given. It does not appear, however, that their challenge has any very solid grounds aside from theoretical bias.[9] The warrantable conclusion is that the prophets as a body made no more question about the historic verity and eminence of the Israelitish patriarchs than they did about the reality of Moses and the redemption from Egyptian bondage.

Finally, we have an evidence which is adapted to appeal equally to the ordinary reader and to the scholar. The patriarchal stories read like the history of individuals. Most of their details were not needed for the portrayal of tribal facts, and it is impossible to imagine any motive

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[1] The Book of Genesis, with Introduction and Notes, p. xlvii.
[2] Amos vii. 9, 16; Hos. xii. 3–5, 12.
[3] Deut. i. 8; vi. 10; xxx. 20.
[4] Isa. xxix. 22.
[5] Mic. vii. 20.
[6] Jer. xxxiii. 26.
[7] Ezek. xxxiii. 24.
[8] Isa. xli. 8; li. 1, 2.
[9] Compare James Orr, The Problem of the Old Testament, pp. 94–98.

for their introduction by a writer who had a design to sketch facts of that order.[1]

II.—Estimates of Moses as Leader and Lawgiver

It is only at the extreme end of critical negation that an out-and-out denial of the historicity of Moses has been entered. Occasionally an intemperate champion of celestial mythology or a zealot for the pan-Babylonian conception of ancient history may have gone to that excess. But with the great body of critics the reality of Moses as an historical character has been a steadfast datum. The question, therefore, which it is worth while to consider concerns not so much his real existence as the nature and extent of the work which he accomplished.

In pronouncing on these points Kuenen hardly represents the acme of critical radicalism. He admits the actual occurrence of an exodus from Egypt, in the management of which a potent leadership was demanded and exercised. "We may not doubt," he says, "that the exodus is an historical fact. Independently of the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua, it is proved by the testimony of the prophets. They obviously start from the supposition that none of their contemporaries disagree with them as to the deliverance out of Egypt. This would be inexplicable if the Israelites had not really dwelt in Egypt, and escaped from Pharaoh's control before they settled in Canaan."[2] Kuenen also concedes the probability that in the Pentateuch, as we have it, there is one great memorial of the legislative activity of Moses. "He endeavored," writes the critic, "to inculcate his own conception of the requirements of Jahve[3] on the people whom

[1] Compare Driver, article "Jacob," Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, II. 534. [2] The Religion of Israel, I. 117.

[3] Some of the critics with whom we are dealing use this form, and we have taken the liberty to employ it generally in references to the covenant God of Israel.

he liberated. We learn what this conception was from the ten commandments, or 'the ten words,' as they are called in the Pentateuch itself. They are most probably derived, if not in their present form, yet as far as the main thoughts are concerned, from Moses himself."[1] But, on the other hand, Kuenen makes a sweeping reduction from the record traditionally connected with Moses. We have in that record, he contends, as also in that relative to Joshua, an illustration of a compacting process. "Events which in reality were distributed over a very long period, deeds which were achieved by more than one generation and mostly by particular tribes, were compressed by tradition into a very short space of time and were ascribed to all Israel."[2] Nor was this all. A very free hand was used in describing the events associated with the Mosaic period. The books from Exodus to Joshua inclusive abound in accounts which will not endure critical inspection. "Their representations, to put it in a word, are utterly unhistorical, and therefore cannot have been committed to writing, till centuries after Moses and Joshua."[3] Even those passages in the reputed history which exhibit Moses as the inculcator of a monotheistic faith cannot be accepted without qualification. What can legitimately be affirmed is that he imposed a type of religious obligation which naturally worked in the direction of the lofty monotheistic standpoint of the literary prophets. "It is highly probable that he received a deep impression of the might and glory of the God of his nation, chose him for the sole object of his adoration, and elevated this his choice into a law for all Israel."[4] As respects the authorship of written laws, nothing can be

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[1] The Five Books of Moses: a Lecture Delivered in 1870. See also The Religion of Israel, I. 274; II. 7. [2] The Religion of Israel, I. 134.
[3] An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch, p. 42. [4] The Religion of Israel, I. 280.

accredited to Moses aside from a brief form of "the ten words." No authoritative code having Mosaic associations was published before the age of Josiah. Any collections of laws which may have been in existence before that time were without governmental sanction. To no extant collection did the prophets as a body accord the character of a divinely sanctioned code. "Least of all did they recognize the authority of the ceremonial injunctions; for if we except Ezekiel and certain utterances relative to the Sabbath, they show complete indifference toward them or even declare that they do not include them among the commands of Jahve."[1]

Wellhausen agrees very largely with Kuenen, but on some points appears a shade more negative in his views. He qualifies very appreciably the office of Moses as the reputed founder of a theocratic state. Moses, he says, proclaimed Jahve as the God of Israel. But a state specifically distinguished by holiness he did not found on that basis; or, if he did, it did not have the slightest practical consequence or the least historical significance. "Out of the common religious feeling grew for the first time the state, and indeed not a specially holy state, but the state as such."[2] Again, Wellhausen treats as utterly unhistorical the supposed connection of Moses with the Pentateuchal legislation. "The law," he asserts, "is the product of the spiritual development of Israel, not the starting point thereof. As a whole it is first adapted to post-exilian Judaism and shows itself then for the first time as operative; previously it had no adaptation and was perfectly latent."[3] Not even so much as "the ten words" can be referred to Mosaic authorship. So at least the critic seems to teach in what he says of the relation of the

[1] The Religion of Israel, II. 7, 8; The Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch, p. 175.

[2] Israelitische und Jūdische Geschichte, p. 30. [3] Ibid., p. 17.

decalogue to the Deuteronomic reformation in the reign of Josiah.[1] Further, Wellhausen is very positive in repudiating the conclusion that Moses is entitled to be regarded as an inaugurator of monotheism. "That is contradicted," he argues, "most emphatically by the simple fact that Jahve is a proper name, which gives prominence to one individual in a genus. Monotheism was unknown to ancient Israel." He adds: "As little as Jahve was the universal God, so little was he in our sense the supersensible and spiritual God. Finally, if the idea of the Godhead as fundamentally moral is to be regarded as a Mosaic inheritance of ancient Israel, that can occur only with very limited right. At least we must keep at a distance our conception of morality."[2]

Stade and Smend so nearly coincide with Wellhausen on this theme that there is no need to give their views in detail. Both deny that Moses fulfilled the rôle of a lawgiver in any eminent sense and locate his historical importance in what he did rather than in what he wrote, namely, in the fruitful beginnings of a new national and religious career which he helped to create for Israel. Both teach that he inculcated rather the exclusive service of Jahve than a proper theoretical monotheism. The Mosaic authorship of the decalogue is questioned by Stade, and Smend discredits the historic verity of the Sinaitic covenant.[3]

In an attempt to estimate Moses the scientific inquirer, it must be admitted, deals in considerable part with probabilities rather than with certainties. Just how much of the traditional views can stand the test is not a matter for precise and conclusive historical induction. The best that

[1] Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, p. 130. [2] Ibid., pp. 30–32.
[3] Stade, Geschichte des Volkes Israel, also Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments; Smend, Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte.

can be done is to observe a just balance in weighing evidences which seem to make for conflicting propositions. In our view the more negative critics have sometimes shared in the fault which they have so freely charged against the traditionalists. In their partiality for certain presuppositions they have permitted themselves to be pushed into a one-sided review of the evidences and have used the faculty of critical divination with unwarrantable freedom and confidence.

What has just been said may be applied on the theme of the significance of Moses as a religious leader. Some weight may undoubtedly be given to the presupposition that the high ideal of ethical monotheism was progressively developed in Israel. But this presupposition may easily be overworked. If history attests that the law of gradual progress has had a wide scope in the perfecting of religious thought, it attests no less that gifted personalities have been the efficient agents of progress, and have betimes struck levels of religious feeling and conception to which succeeding generations for lengthened periods have found it difficult to ascend. As Kautzsch remarks, "Those who recognize everywhere simple development in a straight line from crude or at least naïve naturalism to more and more purified moral conceptions quite overlook the circumstance that their contention is opposed by demonstrably historical facts. Epoch-making religious ideas generally come upon the scene in full strength and purity; it is only in course of further development that these products of religious creative genius, or, better, of divine impulse, are corrupted and disfigured by the intrusion of vulgar ideas and selfish interests. Such was the fate of the religion of Jesus Christ in the Roman Church with its popes and monks; and the same thing happened to many of the great fundamental ideas of the

Reformation at the hands of Protestant scholasticism. And we are quite safe to assume something of the same kind in the process of the development of Jahvism. The great fundamental ideas upon which its institution rests were often forced into the background during the wandering period of the people's history and in the time of endless struggles for national existence under the Judges."[1] From this standpoint it is clearly apparent that criticism makes a very dubious venture when it selects from the books pertaining to the post-Mosaic period sentences which imply an inferior conception of Jahve or of his moral government, and then proceed to draw the inference that a high standard could not have been set forth by Moses. In the same books glimpses of higher and better conceptions unquestionably are in evidence. Now, it is easy enough to affirm that the latter were borrowed by the historians from a late stage of development, while the former are a true token of views handed down from the age of the founder and left unchallenged by his standard. But evidently it is not so easy to prove that the lower grade of conceptions does not represent a lapse, by reason of intellectual and moral slowness, from an ideal recognized at an earlier time by at least the best spirits in Israel. Certainly the early publication of the high ideal was matter of earnest conviction throughout the later ages. Not a single champion of ethical monotheism in the post-Mosaic history of Israel has left on record the slightest intimation that he regarded himself as an innovator in his advocacy of that system. In the absence, then, of an *a priori* theory as to the necessary course of religious development, there is no positive veto to the conclusion that Moses stood practically on the plane of ethical monotheism, though it may be admitted that

[1] Article "Religion of Israel," Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, V. 632.

his interest was rather centered upon the exclusive right of Jahve over Israel than upon the theoretic question of the sole validity of the monotheistic postulate. The objection that Jahve as a personal name denotes one representative of a genus is rather verbal than substantial. An historical consideration could easily have afforded, especially in an age not given to abstract terminology, a preference for the personal name even on the part of one who was disposed to put into it a monotheistic signification.

In regard to the legislative function of Moses, if there is reason to stop short of dogmatic affirmations there is equal ground to refrain from sweeping negations. One broad fact may legitimately be given much weight as against the latter. In all the later ages of Israel's history Moses was accorded an unrivaled position as the national lawgiver. That reputation evidently antedated every Old Testament code which criticism finds any reason for assigning to post-Mosaic times; for, apart from such reputation, the compiler or editor of a code could neither have experienced a motive nor apprehended a right to associate it with the name of Moses. The fact that the association was made so uniformly is a clear proof of a ruling conviction that the groundwork of Israel's legislation was derived from the great leader in the Exodus. The firm intrenchment of this conviction in the national consciousness may properly count for something as an historical token. It is claimed, it is true, on the other side, that the prophets as good as ignored the function of Moses as lawgiver. But this claim is in need of a better justification than has been given. Doubtless, in their lofty appreciation of the ethical conditions of the divine kingdom, and in their struggle against a shallow and lax public conscience, the prophets were capable of speaking

in a depreciatory tone of the virtue of ceremonial observances. This fact, however, is perfectly intelligible apart from the supposition that they entertained very slight regard for the function of Moses as lawgiver. Their zeal for higher things made it possible for them to put into an impassioned message a disparaging reference to the inferior interest of mere ritual.[1]

The infrequency of their formal references to Moses might seem, indeed, to imply the lack of any vivid impression of his achievements as a framer of national institutions. But we are advised against a hasty resort to this inference by prominent historical facts. In the book of Deuteronomy, which no one supposes to have been, in its main contents, later than the reign of Josiah, and which therefore was in evidence in the midst of the great prophetical era, the lawgiving function of Moses is profoundly emphasized. That a book so largely imbued with the prophetical animus as is Deuteronomy should take this ground may be counted no mean indication of the common understanding in the ranks of the prophets as to what was actually included in the providential vocation of Moses. Moreover, it is not to be presumed that their minds escaped being influenced by the picture of Mosaic leadership and of the transactions at Sinai which were contained in the Jahvist and Elohist narratives. In short, Professor Orr seems to keep within the bounds of a sober induction when he says: "If Deuteronomy was promulgated in the reign of Josiah; if the JE histories existed a century and a half earlier, it is strange inconsequence to talk of the paucity of references in the prophets before Malachi as showing that Moses was not connected in the Israelitish mind with the work of legislation."[2] As

[1] Compare König, Der Offenbarungsbegriff des Alten Testaments, II. 351, 352. [2] The Problem of the Old Testament, pp. 99, 100.

previously indicated, it is remote from our intention to attempt to measure precisely the function of Moses as legislator. What we have said we have said in justification of the conviction that the more negative theories proceed beyond the warrant of the evidence. The reputation of Moses as lawgiver is not shown to have been simply the product of an unhistoric imagination or of sacerdotal invention. It is permissible to believe that it was built upon a real historic basis.

III.—Judgments on Prophecy

Sentences which read like distinct declarations of a naturalistic standpoint occur in the writings of Kuenen. The notion that Israel was specially selected of God to serve as the medium of a divine revelation he repudiates as a childish fancy. "Israel," he says, "is no more the pivot on which the whole world turns than the planet which we inhabit is the center of the universe. In short, we have outgrown the belief of our ancestors. Our conception of God and of the extent of his activity, of the plan of the universe and its course, has gradually become far too wide and too grand for the ideas of Israel's prophets to appear any longer otherwise than misplaced in it." Again he remarks: "Although, considered as a whole, the Old Testament may with justice be adduced as testifying in favor of supernaturalism, its separate parts regarded in the light of criticism speak loudly for a natural development both of the Israelitish religion itself and of the belief in its heavenly origin."[1]

This naturalistic conception of the Old Testament religion Kuenen applies specifically to Hebrew prophecy. He admits, indeed, the exceptional character of that

[1] The Religion of Israel, I. 9, 11.

prophecy, but refuses to see therein any token of a specifically divine or supernatural origin. "The prophets of Baal and Ashera," he writes, "of whom the Old Testament itself informs us, can only have had some unessential traits in common with those of Jahve, at least with the later prophets of Jahve. In short, Hebrew prophecy is indeed something quite peculiar, just as much as, for instance, the Greek philosophy. Just as the latter can only be explained by the character and the history of the Hellenes, so the turn of mind peculiar to the Israelites and the course—certainly no ordinary course—of their fortunes must have combined to bring about the rise, and especially the later development, of prophecy in Israel. But if we take both into consideration, even this unique phenomenon is explained without difficulty."[1] Prophecy is a human phenomenon, the highest utterance of the Israelitish spirit.[2] In a sense, the critic grants, it is from God. But this admission is no clear token of an intention to modify the naturalistic premises to which he has given such unequivocal expression. One who substitutes pantheism for theism proper could say as much, since all things are, in his view, from the ultimate power to which he chooses to apply the divine name.

Unfulfilled predictions, Kuenen contends, contradict the supposition of the supernatural inspiration of the prophets. On the other hand, fulfilled predictions do not establish that supposition. "From the nature of the case the agreement between the prediction and the event admits of more than one explanation. It must first be proved that the prediction actually preceded the event. If that proof is given, the agreement itself can be derived either from the divine inspiration of the prophet, or his

[1] The Religion of Israel, I. 212.
[2] The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, p. 4.

right discernment of the course of the events, or the influence which the prophecy itself exercised on the dispositions and actions of those who became acquainted with it—if, for this possibility also cannot be excluded, it is not to be regarded as accidental."[1] The citation is significant as showing the dogmatic determination with which Kuenen excludes the supernatural. Very likely it was a crass form of supernaturalism which he had in mind rather than the idea of an immanent divine working *directed by purpose and foresight,* and regardful of the psychical constitution of its subject. But in his recorded statements he seems not to admit so much as this kind of working. Prophecy reduces in his definition to the fully explained product of national characteristics and conditions.

Holding these premises, Kuenen evidently could not be inclined to deal sympathetically with that element of prophecy which relates to the Messiah and to the Messianic age and kingdom. He admits, indeed, that Christians cannot be blamed for seeing in some of the words of the prophets and the psalmists forms of expression adapted to portray their suffering Master. Nevertheless, he holds that in making the application they depart from the domain of strict exegesis. Under close inspection the meaning which the common Christian interpretation has put into the Old Testament passages proves to be illusive. "The traditional Messianic prophecy is undoubtedly a beautiful whole. As an expression of the belief of Christendom in the unity and regular development of God's plan of redemption, it preserves its value for us and for all subsequent ages. But it forms no part of the historical reality. One stone after another must be removed from it, and placed elsewhere. When, finally,

[1] The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, p. 277.

the support which the earliest Christian literature seemed to offer has fallen away the whole edifice collapses."[1]

The definite expression of a naturalistic standpoint in which Kuenen indulged is not found, so far as we have discovered, in the writings of Wellhausen. Indeed, he seems to disagree with the older critic's assumption of the competency of criticism to explain everything on the score of natural and ascertainable causes. "The reason why," he says, "the Israelitish religion has led from an approximately like beginning to an altogether different outcome from that of the Moabitish does not admit of an ultimate explanation. However, a succession of changes can be described in which the way was laid down from heathenism onward to the rational worship of God in spirit and in truth."[2] Such language, if it does not assert, at least makes room for the idea of specific divine purpose and causation back of Israel's history.

In relation to the Messianic element in prophecy Wellhausen shares in the coldness of Kuenen. He discovers very little of that element in most of the prophetical writings. The Jewish Messianic hope, he maintains, was not adapted to prefigure the real Christ, and no deference was paid to it by him. Indeed, he cut himself entirely loose from it, and disowned the titles which might serve to suggest any connection with it. In calling himself by the name which is rendered "Son of Man" he had no thought of assuming the rôle of Messiah. "Since Jesus spoke Aramaic, so he did not call himself *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, but *barnascha*. That, however, signifies man [der Mensch] and nothing further; the Aramæans had no other expression for the conception. The earliest Christians, however, did not understand that Jesus called him-

[1] The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, p. 496.
[2] Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, p. 35.

self simply man. They regarded him as the Messiah, turned, accordingly, *barnascha* into a designation of the Messiah, and translated, not as they ought to have done, with *ὁ ἄνθρωπος*, but quite falsely with *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.*"[1]

In passing upon Kuenen's naturalistic estimate of Hebrew prophecy it is appropriate to notice the concessions which he makes relative to the extraordinary character of that great factor in the Old Testament system. In the first place, he concedes a remarkable sense of divine vocation in the prophets. "The canonical prophets," he says, "all, without distinction, are possessed by the consciousness that they proclaim *the word of Jahve,* and express that conviction on frequent occasions and in the most unambiguous manner. . . . This self-consciousness of the Israelitish prophets is a fact of the very greatest importance. We see here men who can find no words sufficient to declare the might and majesty of Jahve; who have a deep and lively feeling of their own utter nothingness before him, and nevertheless, in spite of the distance which separates them from him, declare emphatically that they know his counsels and speak his word."[2] Now, what is the explanation of this unique sense of vocation which the critic so strongly asserts? Certainly the supposition does not seem far-fetched that the Spirit of God was there and wrought specifically to induct these men into the execution of a great providential task.

Again, Kuenen admits that the prophets, far from being the mouthpiece of national wishes and sentiments, stood very largely in distinct opposition to the popular

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[1] Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, pp. 342, 346, 349.
[2] The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, pp. 74, 76.

current. "The canonical prophets," he writes, "have struggled forward in advance of their nation and of their own fellow prophets. In consequence of this, their view of the state of the people and their expectation regarding Jahve's dispensations have become different, and their preaching frequently directly opposed to the popular spirit and its organs."[1] Why as a class should they have been thus distinguished? Who can say that this peculiarity in their activity is not consonant with the supposition that the Spirit of God wrought in them as select agents of the kingdom of truth and righteousness?

Again, Kuenen accords to the message of the prophets a lofty preëminence as respects the essential worth of its content. "Ethical monotheism," he affirms, "is their creation. They have themselves ascended to the belief in one only holy and righteous God, who realizes his will, or moral good, in the world, and they have by preaching and writing made that belief the inalienable property of our race. . . . The one God of heathenism was another than that of Israel; he was not, like the latter—if I may so express myself—ethical to the very core."[2] If, now, the source is to be regarded as correspondent to the product, why should not the preëminent excellence of the prophetical message be taken as a mark of the preëminent working of the Divine Spirit?

Still further, our critic commends the moral and religious disposition of the prophets as corresponding in very fair degree with their lofty message. "Here is a series of men," he remarks, "for whom religion is the highest thing, and the realization of religion the aim of their life. Where do you find more earnestness in the conception of a task so beautiful? where greater perseverance amid temptation and contest? where heartier

[1] The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, p. 582. [2] Ibid., pp. 585, 590.

love of good and of the One who works good? where firmer confidence in the triumph of truth and right?"[1] With these questions we may well join the supplemental inquiry, Does not the harmony between the character of the prophets and their lofty message afford us a specially firm warrant for the conviction that the Spirit of God wrought mightily in them as the select instruments for achieving a great purpose?

Once more, Kuenen supposes the religion of the prophets to have been the congenial antecedent of that incomparable historic person on whom Christianity is founded. "The prophecy," he says, "that Jahve would give his law in the inward parts of the children of Israel and write it in their hearts had become realized in him. . . . He was therefore able both to practice himself and to recommend in his preaching to others *the purely spiritual religion of the heart.* Thus the altogether unique significance of Jesus is unmistakable. Christianity is *the religion of Jesus,* his creation, the fruit of his most excellent individuality. But it is no less true that in Christianity the religion of Israel fulfilled its destiny and became a world-religion."[2] The significance of the connection is obvious. If Jesus stands forth as the practical realization of the religious ideal, and Hebrew prophecy prepared the way for him, then it is entirely credible, if God has any connection with this world's events, that his Spirit wrought with special potency in Hebrew prophecy. It is difficult to see how there can be any motive to resort to a different belief on the part of one who is not wedded to a deistic or pantheistic standpoint.

The argument for the naturalistic interpretation of prophecy which Kuenen bases on the fact of unfulfilled

[1] The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel, p. 591. [2] The Religion of Israel, II. 278, 279.

predictions suffers from an element of exaggeration and arbitrariness. The imprint of divine agency upon the lofty ethical and religious content of prophecy is not to be regarded as obliterated by failure of this or that presage to obtain a discoverable fulfillment. Furthermore, it is no plain dictate of logic that fulfilled prophecies can count for nothing in favor of prophetical inspiration so long as any specimens of unfulfilled prophecies are in evidence. No reasonable theory of inspiration ignores the modifying influence of human conditions, or claims that the prophet never mingled with the divine message any element of personal opinion or preference. The dead level conception has no indefeasible right as applied even to the work of a single biblical writer. There might, then, be instances of unfulfilled predictions, and yet so much be found, within the compass of prophecy, of lively presage, firm anticipation, and confident delineation of issues lying beyond the horizon—so much to which the actual course of events corresponded—that it would be reasonable to infer a power of uplift and direction back of the prophets' thoughts about the future. To this consideration there is, of course, to be added the commonly admitted maxim that the conditional element, largely characteristic of prophetical forecasts, serves to modify the demand for strict fulfillment.

The downfall of the edifice of Messianic prophecy, which Kuenen assumes, has not been made obvious except to eyes anointed with a special kind of critical eyesalve. It may be admitted, doubtless, that one and another stone which have been located in that edifice by the traditional interpretation might better have been left out; but that is not saying that sufficient materials are not left for a comely edifice. It may be admitted, furthermore, that prophecy in depicting the Messiah and

the Messianic age made use to a considerable extent of local colors, and thus sketched ideals in terms which could not be literally fulfilled under different historical conditions, but only as respects their more essential import. In other words, account may need to be taken of a typical or emblematic sense in not a few of the prophetical delineations. This however, may be done with entire legitimacy. In picturing the ideals to which they looked forward it was the most natural thing in the world for the prophets to borrow from their environment, to frame their conceptions in forms which did not so much closely describe future realities as typify them more or less perfectly. It would be asking too much to require that their forecasts should be free from incidental features supplied simply by their surroundings. It was enough that their delineations should sketch with measurable fidelity the great consummations of the kingdom of God to which the Christ stands central. That they accomplished this end was evidently the deeply rooted conviction of the New Testament writers. There is substantial ground for believing that it was the vital conviction of the Master himself. No good reason is apparent why that conviction should be surrendered. Traditional interpretations of prophecies reputed to be Messianic may indeed need in some instances to be revised, but the great truth remains that the landscape of Old Testament prophecy slopes upward to Jesus of Nazareth.

The attempt of Wellhausen to emphasize the disconnection between Old Testament Messianic prophecy and New Testament reality, by denying to the consciousness of Jesus the recognition of a Messianic vocation, cannot be regarded as a happy undertaking. While his contention has its partisans, it is not countenanced by the majority of New Testament critics, whether of the moderate

or of the radical class. Thus Harnack, referring to Wellhausen's disinclination to admit the assertion of Messianic claims on the part of Jesus, says: "In that doubt I cannot concur; nay, I think that it is only by wrenching what the evangelists tell us off its hinges that the opinion can be maintained. The very expression 'Son of Man'—that Jesus used it is beyond question—seems to me to be intelligible only in a Messianic sense. To say nothing of anything else, such a story as that of Christ's entry into Jeusalem would have to be simply expunged if the theory is to be maintained that he did not consider himself the promised Messiah and also desire to be accepted as such."[1] With equal force of conviction Wernle contends for the conclusion that Christ recognized himself as the Messiah. The finality, he argues, which was attached by him to his own work strongly sustains that conclusion. "That is the decisive consideration. The superhuman self-consciousness of Jesus, which knows nothing higher than itself save God and can expect none other, could find satisfactory expression in no other form but that of the Messianic idea. That which weighs with Jesus in accepting this idea is not its political but its final and conclusive character."[2] Bousset concurs with this point of view. "We cannot eliminate," he remarks, "from the personality of Jesus, without destroying it, the trait of super-prophetic consciousness, the consciousness of the accomplisher to whose person the flight of the ages and the whole destiny of his followers are linked. And when Jesus wished to give form and expression to this consciousness, and thereby to lift it from its state of fermentation into one of clearness and stability, the only possibility that presented itself was that of the Messianic

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[1] What is Christianity? p. 131.
[2] The Beginnings of Christianity, I. 44, 45.

idea." In the judgment of Bousset it is not improbable that Jesus cherished this idea from the time of his baptism; and that explicit declaration of it was made at Cæsarea Philippi he regards as historically certain.[1]

While thus opposed by the weight of critical authority, Wellhausen's theory depends too largely on a narrow verbal basis to command confidence. The assumption that the Aramaic term which was rendered into the Greek phrase, *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, had in itself a less definite sense than belongs with that phrase does not forbid the conclusion that it was used by Jesus in such special connections as to suggest and legitimate the meaning which from the earliest days of Christianity was put into the selected Greek form. It is to be noticed, moreover, that Wellhausen feels compelled to admit that Jesus actually figured as the Messiah in his final entrance into Jerusalem.[2] Did he proceed, then, in conformity with his self-consciousness in that act? Who would wish to suppose that he consented to have part in an artificial pageant? If, however, the element of Messianic consciousness asserted itself at that point, why not on previous occasions—as, for instance, in the celebrated conversation with his disciples at Cæsarea Philippi? But, says Wellhausen, the Messiahship to which he gave countenance in that closing incident was, in its high spiritual import, in contrast with the ordinary Judaic conception. Assuredly it was. It remains, however, to be shown that Jesus did not see in the old prophecies much of the lineaments of the ideal which he himself cherished. We believe that he did, and that his attitude toward those prophecies was characterized by inward sympathy and appreciation rather than by a feeling of disjunction.

[1] Jesus, chap. ix. Note also Schmiedel's argument for the fact of confessed messiahship, article "Gospels," Encyclopædia Biblica, col. 1888.
[2] Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, p. 349.

IV.—Conclusions Respecting the Significance of the Old Testament Revelation in General

It is gratifying to observe that the school of modern literary criticism, however it may deal with one and another section of Old Testament history, accords a high religious value to the outcome of the movement which has its record in the Hebrew oracles. As has been seen, Kuenen, in spite of his naturalistic standpoint and his curt declaration that the biblical religion is just one of the religions of the world, assumes that even in its Old Testament division it ascends to a height which places it in very favorable contrast to the ethnic systems. Wellhausen pays a tribute of unstinted appreciation to the tender, lofty, and spiritual piety which came to expression through Jeremiah and the prophets of the exile. Stade speaks in strong terms of the religious preëminence of Israel. "Without doubt," he says, "Israel has been in the domain of religion a much more epoch-making, unique, and powerful agent than the Romans have been in the domain of the state, or the Greeks in that of art or philosophy."[1] Again he remarks that Christian faith regards the great representatives of Old Testament teaching as "bearers of a special revelation of God, through which preparation was made for the perfect revelation of God in Christ, and recognizes in the history of Israel and Judaism the special guidance of God."[2] Smend speaks of Israel's religion as a "God-given religion which could serve as the mother-soil of Christianity," and describes the vocation of Israel in these emphatic terms: "Divine Providence fashioned here a people whose national faith possessed and asserted a

[1] Geschichte des Volkes Israel, I. 3, 4.
[2] Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments, § 1.

peculiar power of life, and which in its highest perfection was to become the religion of all the world."[1] As may be judged from citations like the above, these writers recognize in the Old Testament a high providential function in preparing for Christianity. It may be added that in common they regard the Old Testament level as transcended in important respects in the person and teaching of the Christ, who, as Wellhausen says, "was more than a prophet," since "in him the Word was made flesh."[2]

The most disparaging estimate of the Old Testament which has come from scholarly circles in recent times is that represented by certain archæologists who are disposed to exalt Babylon as the source of about all that was good or eminent in the ancient world. As being prominent advocates of this judgment, Hugo Winckler and Friedrich Delitzsch may be brought under review, though a consideration of their writings may take us a little beyond the bounds of our period.

Winckler makes this broad statement: "The Old Testament is rooted in form and content in Babylonian science. The expression of the spiritual life of Israel, so long as it subsisted as a people, proceeded from Babylonian wisdom and was continuously fashioned in conformity to it, in like manner as the entire Israelitish civilization in conformity to the Babylonian."[3] This is equivalent to saying that the Israelitish system in its whole extent was based upon Babylonian astronomy and astrology, since religious theory in Babylon was very much of the nature of an attachment to those branches of scientific and speculative inquiry. "The foundation of all Babylonian wisdom," says our author, "is religion, the teaching respecting the gods, and these gods present

[1] Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte, pp. 6, 32.
[2] Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte, p. 350.
[3] Geschichte Israels, I. 123.

themselves in visible form to the human eye in the stars."[1] The lines, accordingly, along which Israel received the most important contributions from Babylon would seem to be pretty well determined. Thence came not merely a general view of the world as a physical system, but also plentiful elements of a mythology which was closely linked with the sun, moon, and stars. A previous page has indicated how large a portion of Babylonian mythology Winckler thinks to be discoverable in the history of Israel. It remains for us to notice here that he places the crowning distinction of the Israelitish religion, its monotheistic faith, under pronounced obligation to Babylonian thinking. The rise of this faith, he argues, must have had, as its immediate antecedent, a highly developed polytheism, along with a stage of culture involving such comprehensive views of things as to make the polytheistic interpretation seem inadequate. Now, it was precisely at the great center of Oriental wisdom that this antecedent was supplied. The Israelites may have worked up the monotheistic idea in their own way, but the basis for this achievement was derived by them preëminently from Babylonian sources; "from the central points of culture where the human spirit was actively interested to unite the products of a highly developed knowledge with all the phenomena of the surrounding world, and where new views were in conflict with the old."[2] Thus in religion, as well as in the matter of secular science, Israel takes on essentially the character of a dependency of Babylonia.

Delitzsch, in the first of the two popular lectures on "Babel und Bibel," which occasioned for a little space considerable agitation in Germany, emphasizes the influence of Babylon within the Israelitish domain not only

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[1] Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament, p. 157.
[2] Ibid., pp. 208, 209.

on such matters as coinage, weights and measures, and the outward forms of laws, but also on the content of the sacrificial and priestly systems, on the institution of the Sabbath, and on the accounts of creation and the flood. He takes note also of a pictorial representation (a cylinder-seal) in which he is inclined to see a Babylonian version of the Eden story. Even traces of a monotheistic faith, he believes, are discoverable in words brought in by northern Semites about 2500 B. C., and he judges, moreover, that, in spite of the crass polytheism of the current religion, the more enlightened spirits recognized the superior claims of the monotheistic conception in the assumption that the various gods are one in Marduk, the god of light. In his second lecture Delitzsch reaffirms in strong terms his conclusion as to the pervasive influence of Babylon in the biblical province, denies to the Old Testament the character of revelation, and makes disparaging references to its legislation as compared with the Babylonian. From the tone of the lecture it may be inferred that it was written under the spur of the exasperated feeling caused by rather intemperate comments on the preceding lecture.

In considering the merits of this pan-Babylonian theory of ancient history, with its minifying estimate of Israelitish achievement, we may properly notice that to a very large extent it is repudiated even by the advanced school of biblical criticism. Notwithstanding his fellow-feeling for ultra critics in general, and for Winckler in particular, Cheyne takes exception to this scholar's work in these pronounced terms: "In his treatment of religion he is far from satisfactory, owing to his unfortunate lack of religious sympathy. With all his earnestness and acuteness he has not succeeded in making it probable

that prophecy, even in its political aspect, can be explained from Babylonia. And neither he nor anyone else has been able to show that the course of development of the idea of Jahve can be altogether paralleled in Babylonia. That Babylonian and perhaps Arabian influences affected that development at certain points need not to be denied. But the predominant character of the religion of Israel refuses to be accounted for by the pan-Babylonian theory."[1] Stade gives emphatic expression to the like conclusion. Referring to Winckler, Delitzsch, and others, he says: "The oft-recurring representation on the part of Assyriologists that the Israelite-Jewish religion is essentially a reflection of old Babylonian religious ideas, and that the birthplace of monotheism is to be sought in that quarter, stands in contradiction not only with Old Testament data, but with all that we know respecting the history of man's spiritual life and of the religions serving as the vehicles of that life. It overlooks (1) the significance of personality in history, especially in the religion of Israel; (2) the fact that the thoughts which direct the spiritual life of men into new paths arise and win strength not in the centers of culture but aside from these. The representation in question results from a tendency occasioned by imperfect historical and theological training, to lay hold of superficial resemblances, to the overlooking of fundamental differences, and to a consequent failure to apprehend the peculiar character of phenomena."[2] Quite as significant as this judgment of Stade is that of Gunkel, as coming from a scholar who has himself taken generous account of Babylonian influence. With specific reference to the opinions of Delitzsch he draws this contrast between the

[1] Bible Problems and the Materials for Their Solution, p. 145.
[2] Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments, § 1.

religion of Babylon and that of Israel: "There crass polytheism, here in the classic time monotheism; the Babylonian religion thoroughly interwoven with magic, which lies far beneath the feet of the great prophets; there the veneration of images, here the absence of images in the Jewish worship; there the implication of the gods with nature, here the exaltation of religious thought in the classic age to faith in one God who stands above the world; there religious prostitution, which once also had swept over Israel, but which here was driven away in affright by the holy storm of prophecy. The fairest treasure of Israel, however, is the maxim of her prophets, for which they cherished a passionate zeal, the maxim, namely, that God desires no offerings and ceremonies, but piety of heart and righteousness of deeds. This most intimate connection of religion with morality is that preëminently in which the religion of Israel ascends to a towering height above all the other religions of the ancient Orient."[1] It is worth while to add the judgment of Jeremias as being likewise that of an appreciative student of Babylonian antiquities. "The new historico-religious information," he observes, "which comes from the monuments of the ancient Orient will show ever more clearly the superiority of the Israelitish religion even for the pre-prophetical period."[2]

The supposition of Winckler and Delitzsch that Israelitish monotheism was under distinct obligations to Babylon seems to rest on very unsubstantial grounds. The fact which Delitzsch brings up respecting the names introduced by the northern Semites—that is, names in which *El,* meaning God, is contained—has very little bearing on monotheistic faith. The polytheistic Greeks

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[1] Israel und Babylonien. Der Einfluss Babyloniens auf die israelitische Religion, p. 33. [2] Im Kampfe um Babel und Bibel, p. 5.

made perfectly analogous compounds, such as *Theophilos* and *Theopompos,* and other polytheistic peoples have given illustration of the same usage.[1] As regards the texts which are supposed to imply that the gods are one in Marduk, scholars are not agreed on the warrant for putting this sense into them[2]; and even should its presence there be admitted we should have only a pale speculation, which did nothing to vanquish polytheism, and thus bears only the scantiest resemblance to Israel's mighty attestation of the sole right and rule of one God. Israel's prophets cannot fairly be supposed to have derived any vital incentive to their monotheistic message from such texts. In general, Babylonian soil was poorly adapted to grow a crop of effective monotheistic suggestions. "There is not the slightest trace," says Jastrow, "of any approach to real monotheism in Babylonia, nor can it be said that the penitential psalms constitute a bridge leading to such approach. The strong hold that astrology at all times, and up to the latest periods, had upon both the popular and the educated mind was in itself sufficient to prevent the Babylonians from passing to any considerable degree beyond the stage in which the powers of nature were personified and imbued with real life."[3]

That some of the Old Testament narratives show a distinct family likeness to representations in the Babylonian literature is the common admission of unbiased scholarship. The parallelism between the flood stories of the two literatures is striking. There are also points of obvious correspondence between the cosmogony of the first chapter of Genesis and that of the Babylonian tablets. Yet in both instances the contrasts are sufficient to show

[1] Compare Gunkel, Israel und Babylonien, p. 30.
[2] See the objection of Jensen as cited by König, The Bible and Babylon, Eng. trans., p. 77.
[3] The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, p. 319.

that Israel was no mere copyist, and the conclusion would seem to be justified that, appropriating at a remote point traditions which were common to the Semites, it shaped them in conformity with its own higher standpoint. A qualified indebtedness to Babylonian precedent is also to be affirmed in relation to the institution of the Sabbath. Indisputably the Babylonians recognized in some sense the seven-day division of time. The seventh, the fourteenth, the twenty-first, and the twenty-eighth days of the month were signalized as unfavorable days and as days of propitiation. Furthermore, important restrictions as to occupation were imposed for those days. It is to be noticed, however, that the nineteenth day had the same character as the four special days mentioned, and that the restrictions on occupations applied especially to the king, though perhaps not exclusively.[1] That a serious attempt was made to impose the obligation of the Sabbath rest upon the people at large does not appear. In the code of Hammurabi no such obligation is implied. Whatever suggestions, then, may have come from Mesopotamia, the Israelites were not mere borrowers as respects the institution of the Sabbath. Even in its central conception the Israelite Sabbath, as being a day of holy festival, differed from the Babylonian.

As concerns the paradise story, nothing more has been found in the Babylonian records than dim and uncertain resemblances to the principal items of the narrative in Genesis. The general picture of "the island of the blessed" at the confluence of rivers and the legend of Adapa's failure to partake of the food of immortality can be found reproduced in the second and third chapters of Genesis only by the assistance of a fertile imagina-

[1] Jastrow, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, pp. 377, 378; Barth, Babel und israelitisches Religionswesen, pp. 6–14; Gunkel, Israel und Babylonien, p. 28.

tion. In its misty notion of the location of the garden of Eden the biblical narrative may, indeed, partially coincide with a Babylonian hint on the situation of the island of the blessed, but otherwise the parallelism is of the faintest kind. Of the biblical story of the temptation and fall of the first parents the Babylonian monuments have not furnished an unequivocal counterpart. This may be said in spite of the cylinder-seal on which Delitzsch comments, and which contains the picture of a tree, of a serpent, and of two beings in human form. Some of the features of the biblical story do not appear in the picture. The two beings are fully clothed, and neither is represented as the medium by which the fruit of the tree is passed to the other. Expert scholarship also finds reason to question whether the pictured persons were meant to represent human beings rather than divinities. Says Jensen: "Should one see in the two forms two divinities, who dwell by the tree of life, and in the serpent its guardian, all would be fully explained."[1]

The above argument against the pan-Babylonian theory is not to be understood as implying that it would have been contrary to a special divine vocation on the part of Israel to have appropriated many products of Babylonian thought and legislative industry. Why should not the culture of such a world center be made tributary to the outfit of a people having a great and specific religious mission? The paramount question is not as to the source whence various materials in the Israelitish system were derived. That question respects rather the amount of competency shown by Israel to subordinate materials to the high points of view which have permanent worth and significance for the kingdom of God in the world.

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[1] Cited by König, Bibel und Babel, p. 28

CHAPTER V

ELEMENTS OF RADICALISM IN THE RECENT CRITICISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

I.—Denial of the Supernatural Conception

The types of New Testament criticism reviewed in preceding chapters, together with such themes as the challenging of the supernatural and the denial of the transcendent sonship of Christ, have already given occasion to deal with a subject-matter which might be regarded as falling in considerable part under the heading of the present chapter. It will be appropriate, therefore, to limit our attention to a few special topics.

We begin with the most significant item in the preface to the biography of Jesus as given by Matthew and Luke. This item—the supernatural conception or virgin birth—has been assailed by "advanced" criticism in recent years with something like intolerant zeal. Indeed, the tone of more than one critic in treating of the subject suggests that the time has come for displacing the statement of the venerable creed by the declaration, *I disbelieve in the supernatural conception.*

The grounds urged in behalf of this confidently asserted negation are mainly the following: (1) The genealogy of Jesus, as given in both Matthew and Luke, respects the line of Joseph, and therefore is indicative of the presupposition that Joseph was the natural father of Jesus. (2) Joseph and Mary are freely referred to in the evangelical narrative as the parents, or as the father and mother, of Jesus.[1] (3) Stress is placed in the Gospels

[1] Luke ii. 27, 33, 41, 43, 48.

upon the reception of the Spirit by Jesus at his baptism—a point of view that ignores the supposition of origination through the specific and extraordinary agency of the Spirit. (4) Joseph and Mary are said to have marveled at the high strain in which Simeon indulged over the newborn infant, and also to have been puzzled by the words which Jesus spoke at the age of twelve, whereas, if they were cognizant of the miracle of the supernatural conception, they should have been prepared for such things. (5) With that miracle in view Jesus could not have spoken as he is said to have done respecting his mother,[1] nor could his mother and brethren have uttered the recorded words respecting him[2]; moreover, on the given premise the doubt of his brethren respecting him ought not to have found place.[3] (6) The silence of Mark and of John is adverse to the historical reality of the supernatural conception. (7) Paul speaks of Jesus as having been born of the seed of David, and makes no qualification of the statement by reference to an extraordinary agency of the Holy Spirit. Again, he emphasizes the community of Jesus with those whom he came to redeem, by saying that he was "born under the law," thereby intimating the conviction that he was not essentially distinguished as to birth from his brethren of Israelitish stock. (8) Certain ancient versions of the first chapter of Matthew are unfavorable to the idea of the supernatural conception. Thus the Sinai-Syriac manuscript, while it gives the accepted text of Matt. i. 18-20, records in i. 16 the contradictory declaration that Joseph begat Jesus. A like reading is found in one of the citations in the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila, belonging presumably to the early part of the fifth century.[4]

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[1] Mark iii. 33–35; Matt. xii. 48. [2] Mark iii. 20, 21. [3] John vii. 5.
[4] For this list of objections see in particular Schmiedel, Encyclopædia Biblica, articles "Mary" and "Gospels"; Lobstein, The Virgin Birth of Christ.

Respecting the origin of the story of the supernatural conception, different views have been expressed among opponents of its historical character. Schmiedel, while he makes some account of suggestions furnished by Jewish prophecy and by the way in which Philo refers to the birth of children of promise, concludes that the efficient source of the story must be sought in a different quarter, namely, "in Gentile-Christian circles."[1] This is as much as saying that the notion of the supernatural conception sprang out of habits of thought nurtured by Gentile mythologies. On the other hand, Lobstein emphasizes the adequacy of the explanation afforded by Old Testament antecedents. "It is unnecessary," he says, "to resort to the hypothesis of pagan influences or of Hellenic or Oriental factors in order to explain the origin of the belief in the supernatural birth of Christ. The tradition consecrated by our Gospels has its roots deep down in Israel's religion, transformed by the new faith. The dogma of the supernatural birth is the result of the union of traditional interpretation with the Christian principle. Recent researches, completing and enriching observations made long ago, have collected numerous and striking analogies between the biblical myth and legends of Greek or Eastern origin. Yet in such analogies it would be rash to see direct imitations or positive influences. The aversion which primitive Christianity felt for polytheistic paganism was so deep-seated that before supposing the new religion to have been influenced by pagan mythologies we must examine with the utmost care the points of resemblance which are sometimes found to exist between beliefs and institutions."[2] Cheyne agrees with Schmiedel more nearly than with Lobstein. He thinks

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[1] Encyclopædia Biblica, article, "Mary," col. 2963, 4.
[2] The Virgin Birth of Christ, pp. 75, 76.

that the emphasis should be placed upon the Gentile mythologies as sources of the belief in the supernatural conception of Jesus, but holds at the same time that the contribution from these mythologies came through Jewish channels.[1]

With all due respect to the distinguished critics, it may be affirmed that most of the grounds which are urged against faith in the supernatural conception are quite trivial. In speech which was not designed to be formally dogmatic it was the most natural thing in the world to place Joseph along with Mary under the parental category, since he fulfilled parental offices toward Jesus, and in the common view was undoubtedly taken as his father. Whatever may have been the conviction of Mary, it was in the nature of the case next to impossible that belief in the extraordinary distinction of her child should gain real lodgment in the minds of neighbors and acquaintances generally in advance of an extraordinary history of the child.[2] Inevitably he would be referred to as the carpenter's son, and the evangelist in admitting a like form of words was only adopting an accommodation which it was much easier to admit than to exclude. With respect to the alleged incompatibility between the supernatural conception of Jesus and his replenishment with the Spirit at his baptism, it is perfectly in place to remark that the incompatibility is no dictate either of ancient or modern dogmatics. Indeed, it is a strange conceit that the origination of embryonic life by special divine efficiency should involve the absence of further demand for the working of the Spirit. Rather, one might argue that the fact of the supernatural conception, as being a

[1] Bible Problems, pp. 71–73.
[2] Compare R. J. Cooke, The Virgin Birth of Our Lord, Methodist Review, Nov., 1904.

sign of an extraordinary vocation, contained in itself a pledge of the special induement with the Spirit which is reported to have occurred at the baptism in the Jordan. The objection based on the marveling of Joseph and Mary over one and another incident is equally gratuitous. There is no reason to suppose that for their minds the extraordinary conception should have furnished a basis for any complete induction as to the issues of the future. Though they may have been brought thereby into a general frame of expectancy, they could form no definite picture of coming events, and so remained subjects for various surprises. That Mary should even have been disquieted at a particular turn in the career of Jesus is nothing incredible. Complete immunity from human frailty alone could have repressed all excessive maternal solicitude. On the other side, the attitude of Jesus toward his mother involved no denial of the special honor placed upon her by the fact of the supernatural conception, but only accentuated worthily the spiritual point of view which recognizes no bond of kinship on earth superior to that of a common absorption in the will of the heavenly Father. Relative to the hint that the brethren of Jesus were not above the temptation to doubt about his divine mission, it only needs to be said that no report about the miracle of Jesus's birth, had it come to their ears, would have afforded security against doubt. In common with others they could be prepared for an unshaken faith, whether in the supernatural conception or the Messiahship of Jesus, only in sight of his finished career, with the great crowning event of the resurrection included. As for Mark's neglect to report the miraculous conception, it is quite unjustifiable to see therein any denial of that event. With about equal right one might charge Mark with denying the human birth of Jesus altogether, since

he says nothing about it, and makes the baptism in the Jordan the opening scene in his narrative. His object seems to have been to give a succinct account of the public ministry of Jesus. According to a credible tradition he based his Gospel on the testimony of Peter. In doing so he may have found a motive to begin with the public ministry of Jesus, that being the only part of the life of the Master respecting which Peter could give first-hand testimony. Furthermore, he has recorded nothing that makes against the supernatural conception. The same is true of John. The latter, with his pronounced doctrine of the Logos, may not have been inclined, it is true, to greatly emphasize the supernatural conception. But he in no wise excludes it. On the contrary, an opportunity for its insertion comes readily to hand in a consideration of the method by which the Word was made flesh. As regards Paul also, it is noteworthy that, while he has not asserted the supernatural conception, he has interposed no obstacle to its acceptance. It would have been as easy for him to have said that Jesus was begotten by a human father as it was to affirm that he was born of a woman. Only the latter statement occurs. The description of Christ as being of the seed of David is not invalidated by the supposition of supernatural conception. It remains literally true if Mary was of Davidic lineage, and true in point of legal right, as will be seen below, even if descent be reckoned in the line of Joseph. The implicit denial of the supernatural conception which is found in the Pauline statement that Jesus "was born under the law" is far from being a necessary implication of that statement. Whatever extraordinary fact may have characterized his birth, he was born into a family which recognized the law of Moses, and the full yoke of that law certainly passed upon him.

The two remaining objections have a somewhat better claim to consideration than those which have been commented upon. It is not apparent, however, that they are entitled to vanquish faith in the supernatural conception. The recorded genealogy, it may be admitted, appears to give, in either version, the line of Joseph rather than that of Mary. But it remains to be proved that this was not justified by the fairest application which could be made of the Jewish standpoint to the extraordinary situation. "The descent from David," says Dalman, "is attested by the evangelists with regard to Joseph only, and not Mary, in accordance with the view that descent on the mother's side does not carry with it any right of succession, and that her husband's recognition of Mary's supernatural child conferred upon it the legal rights of his son. Lichtenstein [Heb. Comm. on Mark and Luke, 1896] recalls the fact in this connection that all property acquired by a spouse becomes uniformly the possession of the husband according to Keth. vi. 1, and that in the case of any question as to one's origin common opinion was, in point of law, the decisive consideration. Nevertheless, neither of these points touches the right of succession. The criterion for this, according to Bab. bathr. viii. 6, is whether the father is willing to recognize anyone as his son. A case such as that of Jesus was, of course, not anticipated by the law; but if no other human father was alleged, then the child must have been regarded as bestowed by God upon the house of Joseph, for a betrothed woman, according to Israelitish law, already occupied the same status as a wife. The divine will, in the case of this birth, conferred upon the child its own right of succession, which, once Joseph recognized it, would not have been disputed even by a Jewish judge."[1]

[1] The Words of Jesus Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language, pp. 319, 320

In brief, the genealogy was constructed in a manner appropriate to Jewish points of view, even on the supposition of the supernatural conception.

In relation to the divergent texts the judicial statement of Professor Sanday will indicate how inconclusive they are. Referring to the reading in the Sinai-Syriac and the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila he remarks: "There would appear to be three main possibilities: (1) The genealogy may have had an existence independently of the Gospel, and it may have been incorporated with it by the editor of the whole. In that case it is quite conceivable that the genealogy may have ended, *Ἰωσὴφ δὲ εγέννησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν.* Unless it were composed by some one very intimate indeed with the Holy Family, it might well reflect the state of popular opinion in the first half of the apostolic age. (2) The reading might be the result of textual corruption. There would always be a natural tendency in the minds of scribes to assimilate mechanically the last links in the genealogy to preceding links. A further confusion might easily arise from the ambiguous sense of the word *γεννᾶν*, which was used of the mother as well as of the father (cf. Gal. iv. 24). If we suppose that the original text ran, *Ἰωσὴφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας ἣ ἐγέννησεν Ἰησοῦν τόν λεγόμενον Χριστόν*, that would account for the two divergent lines of variants better than any other. A reading like this appears to lie behind the Coptic (Bohairic) version. (3) It is conceivable that the reading (or group of readings) in Syr-Sin may be of definitely Ebionite origin. That which we call 'heresy' existed in so many shades, and was often so little consistent with itself, that it would be no decisive argument against this hypothesis that the sense of the readings is contradicted by the immediate context. It would be enough for the scribe to have Ebionite leanings, and

he may have thought of natural and supernatural generation as not mutually exclusive."[1] Thus the divergent texts form no secure basis for negating the common Christian faith on this theme. Supposing the supernatural conception to have been a fact, it could not with the least degree of prudence and propriety have been given any prominence till after the finished career of Jesus, and then only in the bosom of a believing community. The original popular notion that Jesus was in the full sense the son of Joseph would therefore have a chance to keep in the field for a season, and that it should have left some trace on the literature of the early centuries is not to be accounted improbable.

A review of the attempted explanations of the origin of the belief in the supernatural conception is rather favorable than prejudicial to that belief. As was noticed, Schmiedel disputes the adequacy of Jewish antecedents to account for the belief. He does not find that it was any part of the customary Messianic faith. "The notion of a supernatural birth," he says, "never at any time attached to the idea of the Jewish Messiah."[2] Dalman fully concurs with this statement,[3] and it may be regarded as confirmed by the known position of the stricter wing of the Ebionites, by the statement which Justin Martyr puts into the mouth of the Jew Trypho,[4] and by the testimony of Hippolytus.[5] On the other hand, Lobstein is doubtless in the right in supposing antipathy to pagan mythologies to have served as a strong barrier in the early Christian community against borrowing from that source. The comments in the primitive Christian literature upon the pagan stories of the misalliances of the gods are brim-

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[1] Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, article "Jesus Christ," II. 645.
[2] Encyclopædia Biblica, article "Mary," col. 2956.
[3] The Words of Jesus, p. 276.
[4] Dial. cum Tryph., xlix. 1.
[5] Philosophumena, ix 25.

ful of scorn and rebuke. Accordingly, we may presume that hesitation rather than readiness to promulgate the superhuman birth of Jesus, even in such ideally discreet phrases as are used in the Gospels, would have been inspired by a reference to the content of pagan mythologies. As regards the Philonic references to divine agency in the birth of children of promise, while they might possibly arrest the attention of one whose mind was already possessed by the thought of the supernatural conception, they were much too remote from all semblance of sober historical statements to be efficient sources of that thought; and it is to be noticed, too, that the New Testament books which afford the clearest tokens of Philonic influence make no mention of the supernatural conception. But if neither Jewish belief, in its common or in its speculative form, nor Gentile mythology stands forth as the probable cause of the Christian affirmation that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, we are entitled to look for that cause in the center of the Christian community itself. We may identify it with the testimony of the mother, whose modesty was suitably proportioned to the unparalleled honor bestowed upon her, and with the faith which her testimony found with the chosen few who were admitted to her inmost confidence.

That this faith was able to maintain itself and to pass on into a wider circle was due to its congruity with the total manifestation of Christ in the world. The supposition of the supernatural conception is in accord with the extraordinary personality and vocation of its subject. Doubtless it would be going too far to say that this supposition is theoretically indispensable. Of course, the maintenance of the divinity of Christ is not at all dependent upon it, since divinity proper is no subject for generation in time. Supernatural conception could have

a bearing only upon the finite human factor in Christ. It helps to explain the uniqueness of his humanity. We are bound, however, to admit that a singular relation of humanity with divinity, however that humanity may have been originated, might be expected to yield a unique result. So we may properly hesitate to affirm an imperative dogmatic demand for the supernatural conception. But the truth remains that this item of the evangelical record appears in eminent accord with the unique personality and career of the Christ. It was enshrined in an early and vital Christian tradition. To compel the mind and heart of Christendom to surrender it, criticism will need to bring forward more cogent evidences than it has yet furnished.

II.—Unfriendly Treatment of the Gospel History

Among the recent contributions of radical criticism a canon for judging the gospel content challenges attention. Proceeding on the assumption that the worshipful attitude toward their hero which was maintained by the biographers of Jesus was a fruitful source of exaggeration, Schmiedel concludes that a basis of credibility must be sought in such items of the gospel records as do not reflect the attitude in question, such items as rather run counter to the demands of a bent to glorification than afford satisfaction thereto. Items of this description constitute "foundation pillars," and whatever is conformable to them may be used with a fair degree of confidence in constructing our idea of the person, the teaching, and the work of Jesus.[1] In the view of Schmiedel a careful scrutiny of the Gospels reveals nine passages—very brief in every instance and consisting mostly of

[1] Encyclopædia Biblica, article "Gospels."

single verses—which are sufficiently credible to serve as a basis of historic inference.[1]

A critic who is prepared to give a sweeping application to the above canon will, of course, dispose very easily of large sections of the Gospels. As a matter of fact, Schmiedel proceeds with great facility in this line of critical achievement. He cuts off at a stroke all of Christ's acts of healing which are not explainable on ordinary grounds of medical science. "It is quite permissible for us," he says, "to regard as historical only those of the class which even at the present day physicians are able to effect by psychical methods—as, more especially, cures of mental maladies." The greater marvels imputed to Christ, he concludes, have rather a parabolic than a proper historical content. A narrative like that in the fourth Gospel on the raising of Lazarus thoroughly subordinates the literal to the symbolical. It may be described as a symbolical story designed to magnify the office of Christ as the giver of life to the world. Even in the Synoptical Gospels certain striking accounts of miracles may be regarded as simply transformations of parabolic utterances. "As for the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand, so also for the withering of the fig tree, we still possess a clue as to the way in which the narrative arose out of a parable. . . . And it is not difficult to conjecture expressions made use of by Jesus out of which the narrative of the walking on the water and the stilling of the tempest could be framed." Account may also be made of the influence of Old Testament stories. While it may not be necessary to go with Strauss in supposing these stories to have been well-nigh

[1] The following is the list: Mark x. 17 f.: Matt. xii. 31 f., Mark iii. 31; Mark xiii 32; Mark xv. 34 with Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark viii 12, Mark vi. 5 f., Mark viii. 14–21; Matt. xi 5 with Luke vii. 22 (the stress being here upon the concluding clause).

the sole originating cause of the narratives of incredible marvels in the Gospels, they may still be judged to have contributed to the shaping of such narratives.

Some of those who have figured as associates with Schmiedel in critical enterprise have given even more striking illustrations than he has afforded of the ease with which the gospel content may be retrenched. Certainly it would be a rare critic who could outdo the achievement of the editor in chief of the Encyclopædia Biblica in eliminating the story of Judas the betrayer. "The growth of the story of Judas," he writes, "can be adequately explained. Supposing that the original tradition left the ease with which the capture of Jesus was effected unaccounted for, Christian ingenuity would exert itself to find an explanation. Passages in the Psalms which spoke of the righteous man as treated with brutal insolence by his own familiar friends (Psa. xli. 9; lv. 12-14) would suggest the originator of the outrage; the betrayer of Jesus must have been a faithless friend. And if an apostle, who could he have been but Judas Iscariot? For Iscariot was not a Galilean, like the other apostles; he had a harsh, crabbed temper (χαλεπός), and he carried the purse of the little company. The last circumstance suggested a reminiscence of Zech. xi. 12 f.—a mysterious passage which seemed to become intelligible for the first time if applied to Jesus." This view may indeed be regarded as opposed by the story of the treason in our oldest documents and by the account of the appointment of Matthias to the vacancy in the apostolate. "It cannot, however, be proved that Judas's treason formed part of the oldest tradition; it is separable from the surest traditions of the life of Jesus, and the appointment of Matthias may perfectly well have taken place, even if Judas did not betray Jesus. The proba-

bility is that no one knew how the emissaries of the Pharisees found Jesus so easily, and that the story of Judas's treason was a very early attempt to imagine an explanation."[1] After contemplating this specimen of critical skill one will, of course, suffer no surprise in encountering from the same fertile writer the statement that "We cannot, perhaps, venture to assert positively that there was a city called Nazareth in Jesus's time."[2]

The element of historical induction in the illustrative instances of critical procedure just presented is much too scanty to earn serious consideration. To a mind convinced that the gospel content must be eliminated, or transformed into something quite unlike to itself, the given instances may afford a measure of satisfaction, as furnishing descriptions which may possibly bear some resemblance to actual occurrences in the life of Jesus. But if one is not already convinced of the necessity of putting aside the gospel content, or of subjecting it to a radical metamorphosis, he will not be placed under rational compulsion to do so by specimens of criticism like those recorded. They simply represent ingenious attempts to give a shade of plausibility to preconceived points of view. We may appropriately leave them without further comment to edify whom they can edify. In so far as they are based on a dogmatic exclusion of the supernatural they fall under considerations which have been given in a preceding connection.[3]

It is quite in place, however, to inspect the canon for judging the gospel content which is put forth by Schmiedel. Evidently the canon in question cannot be characterized as wholly false. What the biographer

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[1] Cheyne, Encyclopædia Biblica, article "Judas Iscariot."
[2] Encyclopædia Biblica, article "Nazareth." [3] Part ii, chap. i.

could not have reported out of the incentives of homage and admiration has good claims to the character of real history. At least, it is well secured against one kind of challenge, namely, that based on the liability of a worshipful biographer to exaggerate. Of course, it is conceivable that a writer having the highest regard for his hero might out of carelessness and dullness do less than justice to that hero on one or another point. Still, historical criticism will proceed discreetly in taking distinct note of any statements which could not have emanated from the deep reverence and intense affection of the narrator. Candor requires us to admit that Schmiedel's canon may legitimately be given a certain sphere of application. But that is far from saying that it constitutes an adequate basis for estimating a great and extraordinary subject-matter like that of the gospel history. Taken in an exclusive fashion, it is supremely adapted to reduce to utter meagerness any wealthy biographical content to which it is applied. Suppose one attempts to rate Martin Luther according to its prescription, going through the extant biographies of the reformer, selecting the items alone which present him at such a low level that they cannot be suspected to have been generated or colored by an overwrought admiration. Would a life of Luther reconstructed out of that assortment of materials afford any rational explanation of the mighty task which he achieved in the transformation of Europe? Who would not say that such a method of reconstruction would serve only to turn history into a dumb enigma? Still less can Jesus Christ and his world-transforming mission be satisfactorily expounded by the like method. The method is too grudging; yea, it is intolerably narrow. The person and work of Christ as pictured in the Gospels rightfully claim a broader basis of judgment. They are

entitled to be judged from the standpoint of their congruity with the crowning consummations of the Old Testament religion; from the standpoint of the mighty influence which went forth from them as attested by the apostolic and post-apostolic literature; from the standpoint of their intrinsic excellence and self-consistency. In connection with this last basis of judgment it is appropriate to repeat a sentiment which has been expressed in the striking but sober maxim, "None but a Jesus could fabricate a Jesus." No unbalanced biographer, easily parting company with facts in order more fully to exalt his hero, could have provided the immortal portrait which meets Christian contemplation in the gospel records—the Christ who so marvelously combined the most beautiful and worthy traits, who maintained such an ideally perfect balance between morality and religion, and in whose consciousness the ordinary and the transcendent were so perfectly reconciled, the divine and the earthly being mingled in such a way that "the lowly and human never degrade him in our eyes, nor his power and greatness remove him out of our sympathies and understanding." When critics neglect ranges of important data like these, and suggest the need of reconstituting the gospel history on the basis of a few texts which exhibit the Son of Man merely on the side of ordinary earthly limitations, we are tempted to recall the case of that ancient party which Jesus reproved for losing sight of the greater things through absorption in the smaller.

III.—The Elimination of Pauline Authorship

While the scholarly world as a whole has become increasingly intrenched in the conclusion that Paul wrote more of the New Testament epistles than the Tübingen criticism accepted as coming from his hand,

the "advanced" school in Holland, following confessedly in the wake of Bruno Bauer, has gone on to the goal of an absolute negation of Pauline authorship. Speaking for this school, W. C. Van Manen, of Leyden, says: "With respect to the canonical Pauline epistles, the later criticism has learned to recognize that they are none of them by Paul; neither fourteen, nor thirteen, nor nine, nor ten, nor seven, nor eight, nor yet even the four so long universally regarded as unassailable. They are all, without distinction, pseudepigrapha."[1] As contributors in greater or less degree to this critical verdict, Van Manen names such scholars among his own countrymen as A. Pierson, S. A. Naber, A. D. Loman, J. C. Matthes, J. Van Loon, H. U. Meyboom, and J. A. Bruins. Beyond this circle of compatriots he scans the horizon well-nigh in vain for supporters. He is able, it is true, to point to Rudolf Steck, of Zürich, and to Daniel Völter, of Amsterdam. But only the former of these can be characterized with full right as an outside advocate of the thesis of the Dutch school. Völter, not to mention the fact of his ultimate residence in the Dutch domain, cannot be described as a German scholar who coincides altogether with the radical Dutch critics. On the contrary, he expressly distinguishes his position from that of Pierson, Naber, Loman, Van Manen, and Steck, emphasizing the fact that in the epistles to the Corinthians, the Romans, and the Philippians he recognizes portions which are to be attributed to the apostle Paul.[2] In the English-speaking world the following of the extreme Dutch school is in number and weight quite insignificant.

With the denial of the epistles to Paul the critics under consideration unite the denial that any one of them can

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[1] Encyclopædia Biblica, article "Paul."
[2] Paulus und seine Briefe. Kritische Untersuchungen, 1905.

be referred to a single author. As described by Van Manen, these epistles are composite doctrinal treatises which emanated from a distinct circle in approximately the same age, an age not earlier than the end of the first century nor later than the middle of the second. In place of the individual writer, says Steck, we are to recognize in the so-called Pauline epistles the work of a school, and this thought of a school is to be applied even to the four principal epistles in spite of the impression which they make of unity in respect of content and language.[1]

Among the grounds which the Dutch school alleges for disallowing to Paul even the four principal epistles the following are prominent: (1) The doctrinal and religious contents of these writings are indicative of a development which Paul could not possibly have reached a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus. (2) In these writings widely divergent lines of thought come to manifestation, on the one hand a kind of teaching claiming to pass beyond Paul, and on the other a teaching which seems to lag behind in a Jewish or Jewish-Christian range. That these sharply drawn contrasts should have been evolved in Paul's lifetime is hardly to be imagined. Furthermore, Paulinism itself, as it is exhibited in the principal epistles, presupposes that the original form of Christianity, with its Jewish conception of the Messiah, had been replaced by larger and more spiritual conceptions; and for this transformation a very considerable period of time was requisite. (3) The problems, theoretical and practical, which come to discussion in these epistles—problems respecting justification, election, the use of sacrificial flesh, Sabbath observance, the estate of marriage, and the like—are not such as would naturally have been brought forward within twenty or thirty years

[1] Der Galaterbrief nach seiner Echtheit untersucht, p. 363.

after the death of Christ. (4) Advanced points of view in the line of a Christian gnosis indicate as the time of composition a post-apostolic era. And the same is true of representations about the rejection of Israel and about the persecutions of the Church. (5) Contrasts between the several epistles, or between different portions of the same epistle, as making against unity of authorship in general, are adverse to the theory of a Pauline origin.[1]

As has been indicated, this sweeping negation of Pauline authorship is opposed by an overwhelming consensus among scholars. Many of the most eminent students of the New Testament have not been able to convince themselves that it deserves the tribute of serious attention. It is repudiated by the radicalism as well as by the conservatism of Germany. Critics representing almost all degrees of divergence from the traditional standpoint—Harnack, Jülicher, Holtzmann, Pfleiderer, Clemen, Feine, Von Soden, Weinel, Vischer, Bousset, Wernle, Wrede, Schmiedel, and others—esteem it an eccentricity in criticism, a fanciful extreme to which sane scholarship can render no countenance.

This consensus appears as the reverse of arbitrary, whether viewed in connection with the grounds asserted by the party of negation or in relation to the positive evidences for Pauline authorship. The former can hardly be called plausible, much less weighty. Take the alleged impossibility that Paul should have reached in the given period such a doctrinal development as is reflected in the epistles attributed to him. Why should not the gifted mind of this profoundly earnest man, under the stimulus of contact with those who had been with Jesus,

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[1] Thus substantially Van Manen, Encyclopædia Biblica, articles "Paul." "Romans," etc.

after once being convinced of the futility of Pharisaism, and of the glory of the risen Christ, advance rapidly along the pathway of his new faith? Indeed, as regards the cardinal principles of that faith, in what period would these have been so likely to have been set forth in sharpest antithesis to Pharisaic legalism as in the period in which both the recollection of his own emancipation existed in full intensity and the company with which he had become allied was wrestling with the problem of its relation to Judaism? Did not Luther go in two decades as far as he ever went in revolt from the mediæval system? Did not Zwingli in scarcely more than a decade make a most radical departure from Roman legalism, polity, ceremonialism, and image-worshiping customs? Was it not in the first burst of the Reformation that the strongest doctrines of divine grace and sovereignty which have ever found place in Lutheranism came to utterance within its bounds? Did not also the Reformed Church very speedily commit itself to a most stalwart type of teaching on these themes? What, then, is there past reasonable faith in the supposition that Paul, when once his point of view had been revolutionized, should have moved on by rapid stages to a grasp of the main issues logically involved in his revised outlook? Absolutely nothing. We have only to suppose him to have been the kind of man revealed in the record to secure a valid basis for the conviction that, under the guidance of Divine Providence, he achieved what he is represented to have achieved in the way of doctrinal construction.

As for the various parties which come to manifestation in the Pauline epistles, a relatively early period is just the one best suited to the presence and activity of the most conspicuous, not to say of all of them. When should the question of the relation to Judaism be in the

first degree a burning question? Evidently at the time when the new faith began to push its way into the Gentile world and the task of adjusting the relations of Jew and Gentile became insistent. When should this question cease to be a burning question? Evidently at a point when the advance of Christianity in the Gentile world had begun to disclose that world as the great field of promise for Christianity, and had caused the Jewish constituency to appear as an inconsiderable factor in the Church. The conditions are thus seen to imply just what the known literature of the second century attests to have been the fact, namely, that the cause of the Judaizers had come to be in that century a comparatively indifferent issue. To place, then, at that late date such writings as Galatians and Romans, with their fervid and anxious polemic against Judaizing, is to wrench them out of all credible historical connections. Both the Judaizers and the intense opposition to their scheme belong where the commonly accepted view of the Pauline epistles places them. The other parties, too, do not appear to be misplaced. In relation to the great principle of evangelical freedom, no party is disclosed which went beyond Paul. That some in their haste and shortsightedness should have applied that principle in a way which outran the prudence of the broad-minded apostle is no cause for surprise. As respects the enlarged and spiritualized conception of the Messiah reflected in his epistles, a door of entrance for that had been prepared in the teaching of Jesus. For a time, it is true, the minds of the first disciples may have retained from their Jewish education a competing conception. But—to repeat a previous statement—the higher viewpoint embraced in the sayings of Jesus must naturally have worked as a leaven to modify that conception, and concurring with

this cause was the vital impression coming from the victorious progress of the gospel in the Gentile world. In face of the actual demonstration that the gospel could not be confined within the metes and bounds of Judaism, the disciples could not well avoid going forward to the standpoint of Christian univeralism. Accordingly, there is no reason to suppose that Paul, in representing that standpoint, would have been isolated. In at least the latter part of his career he must have stood in the midst of a Christian body which held substantially his own view respecting the relatively independent and the world-embracing character of the religion of Christ.

In the above we have already responded to the objection of the Dutch critics, that the ordinary view supposes a too early intrusion of such theoretical problems as those relating to justification and election. The same conditions which made the relation to Judaism a burning question involved an occasion to approach the given problems. A masterful mind, dealing fundamentally with that question, would be under compulsion to look those problems in the face, since they are logically implicated therein. As concerns the practical problems mentioned, such as the use of sacrificial flesh, it is puzzling to understand how anyone should imagine that a long period was requisite to bring them forward. The most primary adjustment between Jewish and Gentile standpoints required attention to them, and it is scarcely conceivable that in an alert and mobile community, like that of Corinth, for instance, a decade could pass without involving a very positive demand for administrative dealing with them.

The allegation that even the principal epistles show traces of a post-apostolic doctrine of the gnosis has no real historic warrant. Speculative tendencies had a

place in Judaism before Paul was born. Not long after his death a quite pronounced Gnostic scheme was published by Cerinthus. It goes entirely beyond warrant, therefore, to suppose that Paul in his day could not have touched upon anything in the line of the gnosis. Even if the culture with which he came in contact furnished no suggestions in that line, it by no means follows that his versatile mind could not have grasped such conceptions of a higher wisdom or gnosis lying at the basis of the Christian dispensation as are intimated in the principal epistles. In all that there is nothing which presupposes the full-blown Gnostic systems of the second century; nothing, in fact, which might not have had place at the middle of the first century. By that time also it was quite in order for Paul to speak of the rejection of the Jews. The observed fact that as a nation they repudiated the Christ, while the Gentiles were receiving him, involved by itself the conclusion that, for the time being at least, they had come short of the grace of God. Paul was only describing the actual situation in speaking of their temporary rejection. In like manner, there is no occasion to suppose that the apostle would have set foot in an imaginary sphere in making such mention of persecutions as occurs in the epistles bearing his name. A religion so high and exacting in teaching and purpose as Christianity could not take many steps in the world of that age without provoking a fierce hostility. This hostility, it is true, may not have issued forthwith into a settled governmental opposition; but that is not what is depicted in the Pauline epistles. The impression which this group of writings imparts respecting Roman administration is perfectly adapted to the time anterior to the Neronian outbreak.

In reply to the objection based on contrasts in the

epistles it is legitimate to observe that these are no greater than might be expected to be exhibited by a writer living in a creative period, moving through changing conditions, and sharing in some measure in the common human liability to changing moods. Indeed, did the epistles bear a reverse character, were they distinguished throughout by a smooth self-consistency, there would be ground for the suspicion that they had passed under the hand of the prosaic method-worshiping reviser. Enkindled religious oratory is never conformed to the model of a flat country. In saying this, however, we have no intention of admitting that the Pauline epistles are specially lacking in the characteristics of continuity and inner consistency. On the contrary, they attest everywhere a subtle mind that entertained a fair respect for logical connections. We may even speak, with an eminent commentator, of "the well-balanced arrangement of the greater epistles."[1]

On the side of positive evidences we have strong external attestations. Especially weighty is that furnished by Clement of Rome in his first epistle. He formally refers to First Corinthians as a writing of Paul,[2] and copies from the first chapter of Romans.[3] Now, Clement was a writer who stood in close proximity to the apostolic age. Harnack finds convincing evidence that he wrote in the last decade of the first century,[4] and Schmiedel considers this the probable date of his epistle.[5] This date is strongly approved by the testimony of Hegesippus respecting the occurrence at that time of the disturbance in the Corinthian church which is presupposed in Clement's communication.[6] Not less is the

[1] Von Soden, The History of Early Christian Literature, pp. 25, 26.
[2] 1 Epist. ad Cor., chap. xlvii. [3] Ibid., chap. xxxv.
[4] Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur, I. 251–255.
[5] Encyclopædia Biblica, article "Galatians."
[6] Eusebius, Hist. Eccl., iii. 16.

given date approved by the content of the epistle, with its apparent identification of presbyters and bishops,[1] and its lack of any reference to second century Gnosticism.

Again, we have a cogent evidence for the emanation of the Pauline epistles from their professed source in a multitude of peculiar details which are brought in naturally enough, but which, nevertheless, are quite aside from the main purpose of the epistles. Mere compilers or manufacturers of dogmatic instructions would have had neither an adequate motive to bring them in nor the skill to impress upon them their stamp of individuality. They attest most emphatically a definite personal source and definite historical situations.

Finally, in their combination of intellectual subtlety with spiritual sensibility, in their union of daring for doctrinal construction with comprehensive practical wisdom, in the sense of possession and in the fervency of expectation to which they alike testify, the epistles bearing the name of Paul, or at least the great majority of them, demonstrate that they emanated from a masterful personality. Had not history furnished us with the commanding figure of the apostle to the Gentiles, it would be necessary to conjure up a man of like dimensions to occupy the vacant place.

We conclude, then, that the critical nihilism of the Dutch school and of its scanty following is totally without warrant, not merely because it contradicts the faith and scholarly conviction of nineteen centuries, but because it is unequivocally vetoed by a sane application of historical canons.[2]

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[1] Epistle of Clement, chaps. xlii, xliv.

[2] On the general theme of the section see Clemen, Paulus, sein Leben und Wirken; Knowling, The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ, Boyle Lectures for 1903–05.

Conclusion

In the light of the review which has been made it is scarcely possible to avoid the impression that the nineteenth century has been, to an extraordinary extent, a period of testing for the Christian faith. Whatever may be thought of the relative weight of the practical difficulties which have stood in the way of that faith in different ages, it may safely be said that, in respect of fullness and variety of intellectual ordeals, no other period has been so prolific as the recently completed century.

What is the result? Can the friends of Christianity congratulate themselves on means of assurance that nothing has been changed, that the era of energetic testing has brought forth no demands for the modification of belief? That would hardly be a valid ground for congratulation. A living religion, deep enough and real enough to meet the needs and to command the loyalty of an advancing race, ought to be able to secure an improved exposition of one or another point in its content through such an intellectual engagement as that of the nineteenth century. Had any previous age gained a complete exposition of Christianity, the fact would tend to the prejudice of its claim to finality, as making it to appear insufficiently large and comprehensive to challenge to perpetual study. There is likely to be room for an improved understanding of the preëminent religion, and it is only requisite that the better understanding should tend rather to confirm and glorify than to overthrow and obscure the great characteristic features of that religion. This is the point of view which is properly

brought to the front in connection with an inquiry after results. The inquiry respects the effect of the extraordinary testing on the great characteristic features of the Christian faith.

It may be affirmed in all sobriety that these have suffered no loss of prestige from the movements of thought in the nineteenth century. Take that basal constituent of the Christian system, the conception of God as supreme ethical Person. It has been brought into competition with pantheism, with materialism, with certain forms of evolutionism, with positivism, and with pessimism. The idealistic philosophies of the early part of the century had at least points of affiliation with pantheism. Undoubtedly a considerable incentive to pantheistic as against theistic thinking was derived from them. The outspoken materialism of the middle and latter part of the century was consistently and boldly antitheistic, formally intolerant of the notion of a personal God. Evolutionism in the dogmatic form advocated by Haeckel was radically intolerant of that notion, and in the professedly agnostic form championed by Spencer it was far from friendly to the same notion. Positivism and pessimism also were implicitly or explicitly antitheistic. What now have these adverse forces effected? Absolutely no permanent detriment to Christian theism. Materialism has been discredited. By an overwhelming consensus of philosophical thinkers it has been declared an impossible theory of the universe. The shortcomings of antitheistic evolutionism, whether in the Spencerian form or in that of Haeckel, have been effectually exposed. The latter never won any title to respect for philosophical competency, and the former has been condemned to a waning influence. As for positivism and pessimism, championship of their distinctive features is

much too feeble to have any serious bearing on the outlook for theistic belief. In relation to the predilection for pantheistc teaching which was fostered by the idealistic philosophies, it may be needful to say that it has not yet been fully spent. But it is also in place to say that potent correctives to that predilection have gained a standing in philosophical thinking. The idealistic systems themselves contained some elements that are more congenially related to the theistic than to the pantheistic standpoint. Such an element was the profound stress which Fichte placed upon the ethical will as the most fundamental thing in the sphere of reality. Such an element also was the rank which Hegel assigned to self-consciousness among the categories. Through these representations the philosophers named provided somewhat of an offset to the pantheistic implications of their own systems. And in recent philosophical thinking this offset has been reinforced by a conspicuous tendency to make enlarged account of the element of will in construing ultimate reality and in explaining the world. At the same time doubt about the compatibility of teleology with the evolutionary process in organic nature has in large degree been vanquished. Thus the conditions have been made favorable, in a philosophical point of view, for assuming that a will, working according to purpose, is back of, and operative in, the world. In other words, the conditions favor the ascendency of the theistic postulate, the establishment of the truth that in naming ultimate reality we name simply the Supreme Person. Never, in fact, has the wide firmament of human contemplation been more thoroughly and securely illuminated by this transcendent truth than it is in the precise epoch in which we stand.

Take another fundamental constituent of the Christian

system, the unique preëminence and lordship of Jesus Christ, the conception of Christ as central to the redemptive process in the world and qualified to be thus central by the intrinsic worth and glory of his personality. Has any ground been afforded for slackened faith in that constituent? We fail to discover substantial evidence of any such thing. The trend of exegesis as a whole has been in the direction of establishing, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that the thought of the transcendent sonship and of the redemptive office of Christ is deeply imbedded in the New Testament. The outcome of critical investigation in general is to approve the conclusion that in the Christ of the New Testament the unblemished ideal is presented to us, and that the ideal is there depicted because the reality had been furnished and had made its ineffaceable impression. How infrequently, within the limits of respectable scholarship, has a suggestion to the contrary been offered during the past century! Before the matchless figure of the Gospels the voice of disparagement has almost always been hushed, and in the few cases in which it has been heard has so obviously failed to justify itself that its message has been hollow and ineffective. In more than one instance the critic who has been free to treat much of the Christian tradition with a ruthless hand has felt compelled to acknowledge in the Son of Man a greatness and goodness surpassing all natural explanation. For example, the author of a very radical book, in which the notion of miracles is treated with conspicuous intolerance and catholic Christianity as known in past ages is supposed to have been placed upon the shelf, remarks: "The empirical inexplicability of Jesus may as well be conceded." Such admissions are properly regarded as decidedly significant. If Jesus is not to be explained

on ordinary grounds, then why may not the explanation be sought on a higher ground? Why may not the catholic conception of his unique relation to the divine, the conclusion that in him the Word was made flesh, imbedded as this conclusion is in the New Testament, receive friendly recognition? Plainly, it is no long or hazardous step which is taken when one passes on from a confession of inexplicable perfection in the historic Christ to accepting the substance of the catholic teaching respecting his nature and relationship. In the demonstrated power of the Christ to effect perennially a living impression of his transcendent perfection the catholic teaching regarding his person is shown to have no mean tenure.

Once more, take that element of Christian faith which concerns the primacy of the Bible in the world's ethical and religious literature. Has the basis for confidence at this point been wrecked? Not at all. Doubtless the enormous and unexampled industry expended upon the task of biblical criticism in the nineteenth century has wrought to modify the conception of the Bible. It has rendered the high technical theory, characteristic of theological thinking in the seventeenth century, an uncomfortable and precarious theory for almost any scholar, and has condemned it to the category of an impossible theory for the great majority of scholars who either have made an adequate review of modern thought or achieved anything like a detailed and searching investigation of the Bible. But to say that much is by no means equivalent to saying that the cause of the Bible has suffered damage. Without doubt some inconveniences result from the relative dethronement of the technical theory. But ample compensation is provided for these in the release of Christian apology from an artificial and

overburdensome task, and in an enlarged freedom to concentrate attention upon that which constitutes a sure title to an immortal primacy of the Bible. That title has not been touched and cannot be touched by criticism. This is made evident by the fact emphasized above, namely, that criticism, with insignificant exceptions, has been compelled to pay homage to the unique perfection of the Christ. For the Bible is the book which depicts the Christ, and which in its tenor and outcome is congenially related to him. By virtue of this fact it holds an incomparable religious treasure, and is placed beyond the reach of earthly competition. And the primacy which is seen to belong to the Bible from this point of view is only confirmed by careful comparison of its ethico-religious content with that of the ethnic scriptures. Means of such comparison have been made available in full measure by the scholarly industry of the last century. The result is not at all embarrassing to the friend of the Bible. Though he may endeavor to be as hospitable as possible toward every point of excellence in the ethnic scriptures, he will still be compelled to say that, in the full and balanced presentation of the most precious truths, they fall much below the Bible, and that their scattered lights taken together are no substitute for the illumination which it supplies to the human spirit. In the amplitude of its ethico-religious wealth, in the perfection and balance of the exposition and illustration of the truths most vitally important, the Bible, at the end of all criticism and comparison, retains still for clear-sighted scholarship its distinct primacy. No child of the race who comes to it in the spirit of candor and earnest inquiry can fail to find in it the word of life.

The Christian believer has no occasion to walk with downcast eyes and desponding heart. Doubtless it is

incumbent upon him to keep in mind the demands of humility. To vent scornful reproaches upon those who do not share his faith is out of harmony with the requirement for brotherly regret over their destitution. Anathemas are strangely inappropriate upon the lips of one who in the midst of the tokens of his fallibility must confess that he is still striving after better light. But a demand to avoid arrogance involves no interdict against cheerful confidence. The Christian believer, at the opening of the twentieth century, should exercise his prerogative to go forward with illumined countenance and joyful spirit. No real barrier has been placed in the way of his faith. The outlook is inspiriting. Never, in fact, since the time when the revelator was entranced by the vision of the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven, has the prospect for Christianity been better than it is at present.

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